

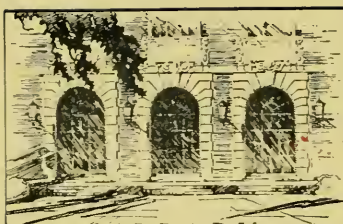
780.923
F184m

Across the Little Space



The Life Story
of
DR. LOUIS FALK

BY
FRANCESCA FALK MILLER

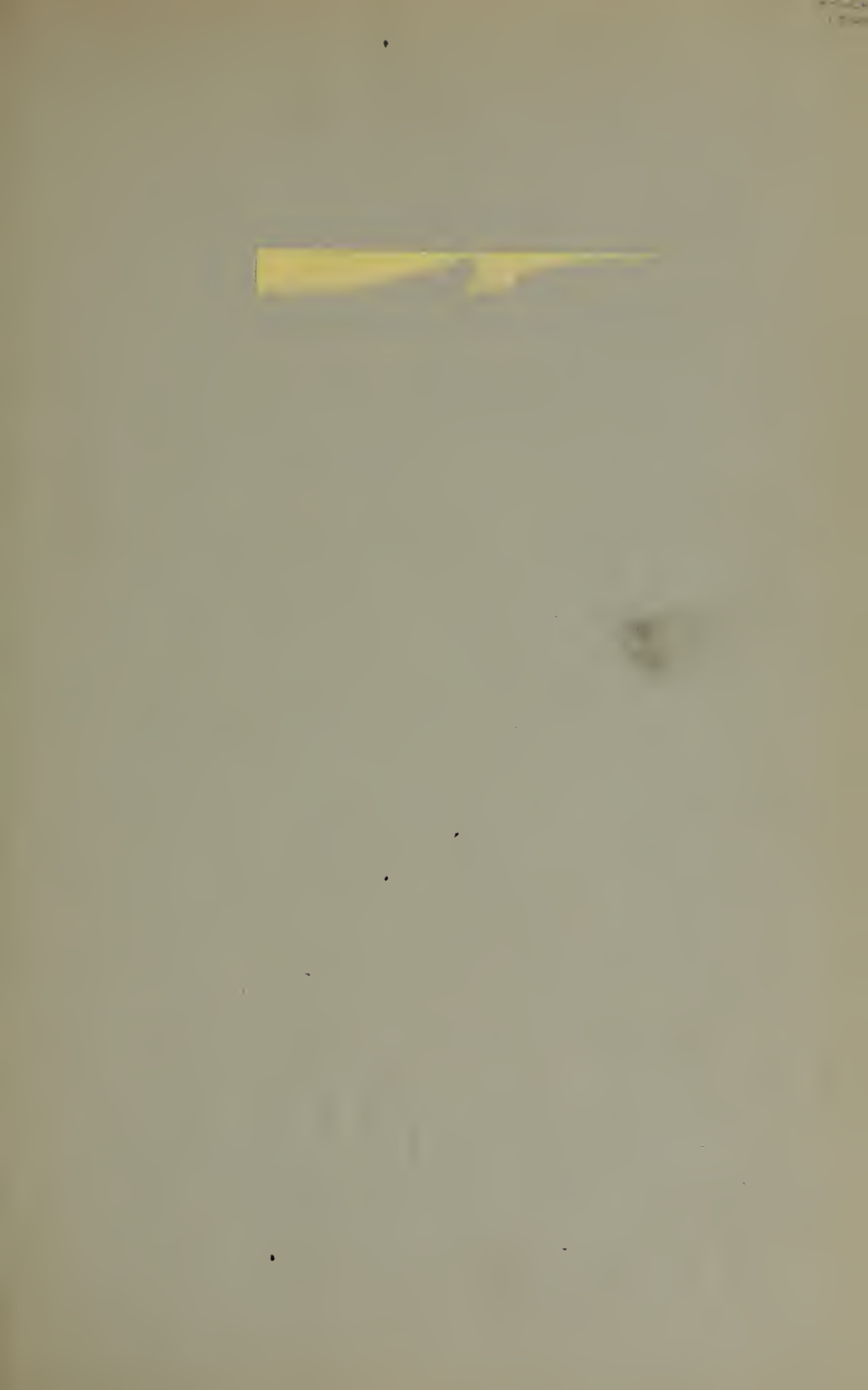


LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

780.923

F184m

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY



ACROSS THE LITTLE SPACE

DEDICATED
to
DOROTHY MILLER STRONG
Mother of "Cara Mia"

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA



DR. LOUIS FALK
(1903)

Across the Little Space



The Life Story
of
DR. LOUIS FALK
as told to
His Great-Grand-Daughter
DOROTHY CARA STRONG

Written by his daughter
FRANCESCA FALK MILLER
(Mrs. Franklin Miller)

1933
THE W. D. BAUMAN COMPANY
DAILY NEWS BUILDING
CHICAGO

ACROSS THE LITTLE SPACE

Copyright, 1933

THE W. D. BAUMAN COMPANY

Chicago, Illinois

Printed in the U. S. A.

180.923
F184m
15 Nov. 1906

Foreword

THIS story of a musician's life, written by his daughter, seems to me one of unusual beauty and charm. I confess I read the last chapter through tears.

Francesca Falk Miller is a poet and when she uses words, she paints pictures with them. How faithful is the picture she has drawn of her German grandfather's household . . . the stern man whose fealty to Carl Schurz exiled him from his native land . . . the gentle grandmother, with the fine sons who adored her! How delightful is the story of the young Louis Falk's student days in Germany . . . days when he walked thirty miles, in order to hear "Lohengrin" for the first time!

It is a satisfying tale . . . early recognition for the great organist in Europe and America . . . joy in his work . . . complete happiness in his marriage to the beautiful woman who herself had so large a part in the musical life of Chicago, and who, through fifty years, was so devoted a wife, so congenial a companion.

Mrs. Miller's story of her father's life, told to a little great-grand-child of the musician, is a distinct contribution to the history of Chicago, particularly from the standpoint of music. It is a book which any Chicagoan should enjoy.

HERMA CLARK.

C O N T E N T S

PROLOGUE

CHAPTERS

- I. Exiled.
- II. My Childhood.
- III. Europe.
- IV. 1869-1871.
- V. The Great Fire.
- VI. 1871-1874.
- VII. Marriage.
- VIII. My Wife.
- IX. 1890-1900.
- X. Sunset and Evening Star.

ILLUSTRATIONS

- Dr. Louis Falk (Frontispiece).
At the Age of Twelve.
Dr. Florenz Ziegfeld.
Mr. Falk in 1874.
Cara Dayton Dickinson (Mrs. Falk).
Mrs. Louis Falk as "Josephine" (Pinafore).
The Falk Brothers, 1880.

PROGRAMS

- Concert: Unity Church, 1871.
Concert: Ole Bull, 1877.
Opera: Pinafore, 1879.
Oratorio: The Creation, 1891.

COVER OF MUSIC

1873

I M M O R T A L I T Y

And there shall come a day . . . in Spring,
When death and winter
Loose their chill, white hold
Quite suddenly. A day of sunlit air
When winging birds return,
And earth her gentle bosoms bare
So that new, thirsty life
May nurture there.
That breathless hour . . .
So filled with warm, soft miracles
That faith is born anew.
On such a day . . .
I shall return to you!

You may not touch me . . . no,
For you have thought of me as dead.
But in the silence lift believing eyes
Toward the dear infinity
Of skies. And listen . . .
With your very soul held still . . .
For you will hear me on some little hill,
Advancing with the coming of the year.
Not far away . . . not dead . . .
Not even gone.

The day will suddenly be filled
With immortality and song,
And without stirring from your quiet place,
Your love will welcome mine . . .
Across the little space,
And we will talk of every lovely thing . . .
When I return . . . in Spring!

FRANCESCA FALK MILLER.
(Mrs. Franklin Miller)

P R E F A C E

IF I had lived to see you born, Cara mia, this might never have been written. I would have been too busy admiring those deep blue eyes, which you inherited from your great-grandmother; that wee bud of a mouth curled so warmly when you smile, or your strong fine little body. But when you decided to come upon our grim old earth to live, I—your great-grandfather—had gone out into the fragrant mists that envelop and veil the strange bourne of eternity.

For the mists are fragrant, Cara mia. Fragrant with memories of beloved ones still on earth and the myriad unborn descendants yet to come. Fragrant with unspoken words and unheard melodies. That dear intimate fragrance of silence—silence deep and calm.

You can never see me, Cara mia, until you too pass through those strange mists of silence. But that will be in long years to come, for you are not yet one year old. Your sweet days are reckoned by months not years.

But you must know me and know me well, that you may understand this thing we call heredity. For into you has gone the blood of generations of ancestors. A bit here and there in your life's stream, from two lines of humanity, that blending in you, make you what you are today—your little self.

From someone you may have inherited religion or a love of the open spaces. From another a spark of wit, a dash of coquetry, a bit of common sense or a great deal of genius. And, God grant it—you may have fallen heir to someone's sense of humor. But from me—your great-grandfather—and from her who was the wife of my years on earth—your great-grandmother—may come a talent, or at least a love for music.

For, oh my little one, music is the divinest of God's great gifts to the human race! It can comfort, calm, and refresh. It can inspire, revive and create. It is the voice of eternity loaned to mortal souls for a little while.

And so, Cara mia, I am going to tell you my own story—my life and music—and because I cannot write it myself from beyond these fragrant mists, your grandmother—my daughter—must do it for me. She loves you, little one, and she alone understands what it means to be born into a home consecrated to this divine art. This art of melody, of harmony, of symphonic beauty.

This little biography will not only tell you of my life and my small contribution to music, but it will be a tale of early life in Chicago among the musicians and artists of that day.

It will not be a child's story, Cara mia. You must wait until

you are a grown girl to read it. But I have a conviction that you will always cherish the picture it unfolds—of your own people living in those “way back when” days of your city—your birthplace—your century-old Chicago.

CHAPTER I

Exiled

WINTER came early to the little village of Unter Ostern near the city of Darmstadt in the year 1848, so long ago. My mother has told me how the gardens were dead by October, even in Southern Germany. But the frost-kissed grapes were abundant and the harvests had been rich. The country-folk had stored their grain and made their wines and beer and were now turning to the happiest of seasons—Christmas. Soon they would be trimming the green *tannenbaum* and calling to their neighbors “*Die besten Glück-Wünsche zum neuen jahre!*” Happy hearts! Simple joys! And into this season I was born.

My father, Cara mia, was a professor in the parochial school next to our church. He taught mathematics, organ, piano, and the theory of music. On Sundays he played the organ at the church service, but I regret to say, this effort on his part, never implanted religion very deeply in his care-free, stormy soul. We were Lutherans, as were all our relatives and friends. Father’s name was John Falk. He was an admirer of Carl Schurz, noted German Socialist. He followed with staunch affection and loyalty every move of the great man, but this same constancy and devotion lost him his country, as you will read of later in this chronicle.

My mother was the daughter of the Bürgermeister. Her long but beautiful name was Wilhelmina Franceska Rösing. The Rösings were a proud, stern, and “highly respectable” family, and when the gentle young daughter fell in love with gruff, hot-headed John Falk, they raised hands, eyes and voices to heaven. Such a marriage would be a calamity. Mina would be wedded beneath her social position. A poor professor? Pouf!

But Mina had listened to romance—and all musicians are great lovers and sentimentalists. She had tuned her ear and heart to the fiery pleading of her ardent lover. They defied opposition—wore it down—until exasperated and wearied, the Rösings capitulated—and the marriage took place.

In 1846 their first child was born. He was named Theodore—Gift of God—and the gentle mother promised him in her heart to the ministry.

This was a tradition in her family—that the first-born son should be given to God. Theodore therefore grew up with his mother's wish in mind.

In 1848—the cold winter mentioned—at an early hour of December 11—another son was born to Wilhelmina Franceska and John Falk, but this time, the delighted father promptly dedicated his second boy to music. And I was that son.

When christened in our parish church, I took the names of the four Godfathers who stood sponsors for me—Ludwig, Rudolph, Anton, Friedelin—but dropped three of these good Teuton appendages before I was out of Kindergarten. One short name was good enough for father—one short name was all his son needed. I never kept even an initial, and after coming to America, dropped the German spelling for the English—and as Louis Falk, lived and died.

Mother was up for the Christmas festivities with young Theodore hanging to her full wide skirts in feverish excitement. But I—fourteen days old—lay in my clumsy wooden cradle and used my lungs lustily. Later I heard that there was extra celebration in my honor, for was I not almost a Christmas baby? And any excuse is enough for a German feast!

The marvelous *küchen* baked with almonds ground into sweet white butter and fine sugar! The rich gingerbread figures cut into shapes of fat men and obese dogs and cats! The quantities of sausages and black bread! And oh, the gallons of foaming dark beer, that Germans love so well!

Was it not the birthday of the dear Christ Child? Was not Kris Kringel—patron saint of all children—good children—somewhere near, with his pack bursting with toys and red mittens? Was not the gentle *Mutter* safely through her delivery of another man-child—the red-headed little *knabe* named Ludwig? And was not Germany God's good place to dwell? *Das Vaterland*?

And then suddenly, *Cara mia*, Germany was not so good to her sons—the sons who dared think for themselves. Carl Schurz was the target of Imperial disapproval. His sympathizers were thrown into military prison or banished. Schurz and thousands of German Socialists left for America—that land which already had gathered into her ample bosom all the crushed, broken and suppressed of Europe. And in adopting her as his foster-mother, Schurz served her faithfully until his life's end.

Many of the Rösings had emigrated during those stormy days. Two of Mina's brothers were living in the States. She herself had grown fearful of constant suspicion and spying. John, her husband,

was too free with his speech. She lived in daily dread of his arrest and perhaps imprisonment. In 1850 a third son was born, and close upon the heels of this event, John Falk, who had spoken too forcefully in his class-room regarding the treatment of his friend Schurz, was arrested and held in prison with other prominent town-folk of Unter Ostern.

Her distracted family helped Mina off to America—to that far-off city of Pittsburgh, where the brothers had located. Her husband was to follow when—and if—released. She was not allowed even to bid him “good-bye”.

That voyage, *Cara mia*, was not as we know a crossing today—no, nor as you will know of it when you are grown to womanhood. It took over a month, with the old vessel buffeting the storms of the Atlantic with more force than sympathy for her passengers. The little mother, although surrounded by friends and other kindly German refugees, had a hard voyage. She, with her three baby sons—Theodore, Ludwig and now Rudolph—huddled on the mist-drenched, narrow deck and fought off sea-sickness, loneliness and a great fear. Only the warm, clinging bodies of her babies saved her from despair.

But sturdy German hearts are strong and courage runs high in Teuton blood. Mina weathered the storms, the homesickness, and the crazed fear that threatened to creep over her spirit with crushing intensity—the fear that she might never see husband or parents again. Many another woman would have lost her reason, but not Wilhelmina Franceska Rösing, daughter of the *Bürgermeister*, and mother of three German sons.

But at last it was over, and following a very rough trip through the coal mining country of Pennsylvania, she reached her brother's new home.

I wish you might have seen those three little boys, my *Cara*! Such round red faces, with staring eyes under their mops of tow-colored or red hair. Such baggy little pants over fat legs. Such funny quilted hoods and home-knitted mufflers and mittens. Dutchy, you say, *Cara mia*? Oh, very!

The home of the Rösings in Pittsburgh was so new and strange. Fine graceful furniture, far more impractical than those huge pieces left behind in the German village. Nottingham curtains, stiff with Pittsburgh smoke. Brussels carpet, with great crimson roses woven into a green field. A wonderful lamp hanging from the ceiling in the center of the room, that could be pulled down in order to light, then shoved up mysteriously. Theodore tried to climb it once, playing monkey, and was promptly spanked for the venture.

Mina loved the color and newness of her brother's home. She thrilled to the noise and swiftness of life in the busy American city. It was only a few months until the father and husband followed

his little family to the Western Continent, and then—her happiness nearly complete—she accepted this adopted land for her own. Mina never saw her parents again, for the Falks never left American shores for the country of their birth.

By this time Germans had come to the United States by the thousands. The “Forty-eighters” they were called. They poured over the states of the Central West, settling upon the rich farmlands of Wisconsin, Illinois and Missouri. Some went even as far south as Texas, where they built their homes and laid out their fields after the manner of the old country. And to this day, *Cara mia*, they so remain, in all their quaint style and sturdiness.

After four years in Pittsburgh, we moved to Rochester, New York, and very briefly, let us skim over those early years of childhood, in that city.

We lived in a small frame house, directly facing a side street, so that when the family sat on their front porch on summer evenings, they could look for a long distance down this street and watch sedate horses, drawing surreys, hacks, and low phaetons, jog placidly along. As a very small boy I often wondered what would happen if some old nag were to refuse to turn either left or right, and continue right on, through our front yard and up onto our wide, low porch. But of course it never happened—much to my disappointment.

Very little is clear of those early days, save school, church, and skating on the wide sweep of the Genesee River. I lived simply and normally as any little boy would do. But as I grew older, two incidents stood out in my memory, remaining with me all these long adult years.

My first was a battle with parental authority.

My father was a firm believer in the rod, without which the child would be spoiled. Only in this case the rod was a small leather strap. He also had a fiery temper, which only my dear mother could control. She stood between father and sons with some success, but always with mixed emotions, until the hour of her death. Her wide full skirt was sanctuary to her brood.

The church where my father played the organ and in whose day-school he was a professor, was a tall, solemn building with a narrow spire. Under this spire hung the old church bell and from this belfry, reached by a wooden ladder, one could look down upon the congregation. And—if one happened to be a small boy of eight or nine years—could drop pebbles slyly down upon reverently bowed heads, ducking back into the shadow of the bells protection.

My brother Theo and I had braved the dizzy height many times for the joy of hearing the stones plop on unsuspecting craniums bent in prayer and the faint little shrieks that followed.

One morning, while indulging in this pleasant pastime, we

happened to glance out from the belfry and saw our father standing like the Judgment Day on the sidewalk below us, with the strap swinging from his strong right hand. Mother, white-faced and pleading, stood by his side.

We pondered a moment together, then decided that it was far more to our advantage to creep out upon the sloping roof than to remain near the ladder. It was a perilous decision and I could hear my frantic mother imploring us to go back. One false move and the art of music and the Lutheran ministry would have lost two of their devotees.

Theodore weakened first and called down to his mother.

"Have father promise not to whip us and we'll come down!"

There followed a family conference, but father was obdurate. I purposely slid a few inches and mother screamed.

"Promise them, John!" she wailed, "They'll be killed!"

Father considered. I really believe he was weighing the pros and cons between a maimed child and a bad one. Finally mother won—or thought she had—and called to us, "Come down, *liebchen*! Father won't touch you!"

We crept slowly backward, like two fat crabs, until our feet touched the belfry window. From there it was only a matter of a few seconds before we reached the ground and were in our mother's arms.

Father whipped us, of course. He never intended it otherwise.

But mother never knew, and we were too loyal to tell her.

The other incident left a deeper impression; in fact it drew my brother and me so closely together, that in after years we were inseparably bound like David and Jonathan. Both lived to pass "three score and ten" and with the years our love and loyalty remained a firm and beautiful thing.

We had gone swimming in a "hole" with other boys—a thing forbidden at home, as neither could swim a stroke. But pride and shame before our companions made us dare family wrath and deep waters. Before I realized it I was out beyond my depth. Theo turned in time to see this, and gentle soul that he was, plunged in after me and sank at once. When we both came struggling to the surface, he grabbed me and hung on. Again we sank together, but three of the other boys rescued us. This ended my swimming forever, for it created a fear of deep water that unfortunately I was never able to overcome.

As I grew older, more was expected of me. I attended school under my strict father, read my Bible daily at my mother's request, devoured all the books I could lay my hands on, and practiced my music long hours on our huge square piano. I was not popular at school, *Cara mia*, for I teased the small girls by pulling their blond

pig-tails, and blushed with embarrassment before the older ones. I was carrot-headed and had freckles as thick as dandelions in our front yard. Only when absorbed in my music, did I lose self-consciousness.

Theodore, on the other hand, was the pet of all mother's friends and of every girl at school. He was quiet, studious, artistic and a great lover of beauty. Only to please our mother did he follow his studies for the ministry, for had he been given the choice, a preparatory school of art and later a trip to the famous galleries of Europe, would have been his preference. But we were boys of another generation, Cara mia. We were directed, led and taught to obey. We never dared dream of disobedience. Even at our meals, where we were forced to eat all that was put upon our plates, we patiently submitted. Mother told me in later years, how she discovered—while house-cleaning her huge round dining-room table in the spring—a little dried-up row of old bits of carrots and turnips, that her boys simply could not choke down. We had slipped them on a convenient ledge, when father's face was turned.

But let it not appear, my Cara, that I am criticising that great strong spirit that was my father. To him I owed much—my ability to bear hardship and handicap—to persevere until the end of human existence. And I know he understood me as possibly no one else in my family did.

Serious work began with me when I was offered the position of organist at the North Street Baptist Church at the age of eleven. It hardly seems possible, Cara mia, that a little boy dared accept such an offer, but of course my proud father said yes, so yes it had to be. I remained at that church until we moved from the city. I wish I could describe my pride in that first position as organist of a large church. It was a wonder that I was not spoiled, but father saw to that. He understood the growing mind so well, and would not let me dwell on my work too much, but kept me humble before my elders.

It had been ten years since a bewildered mother and her three little boys stepped from the slow vessel that had rocked her across the Atlantic onto a new continent. Four times she had gone down into that dim valley, that lies between birth and death, and brought back a new morsel of humanity. Two little sisters—frail like herself, who lived only a little while—and two sons. John, named for his father, and Florenz. And now the family turned their steps Westward, as so many of their race had done, and in 1860 settled in Chicago—there to establish the home that has lived even to your day, my little one. Into the musical annals of this city; into its Historical Society; even into its beautiful cemeteries—Rosehill and Graceland—have gone memories that I am hoping will become precious to you

and to your children—oh, little flower, growing in another generation from mine.

And so the exiles came to the city by the Lake—the city we love best)—and with thankful, loyal hearts, called it Home!



LOUIS FALK
At the Age of Twelve

CHAPTER II

My Childhood

TOWNSEND STREET in 1860 was a charming avenue of small houses, green lawns and a varied collection of shade trees. Today, my Cara, it is in the heart of Little Italy, and the intersection of the two thoroughfares, where my brothers and I played "tag" after school, is now called "Death Corner"—because of the many killings in the deplorable gang-wars of 1927 to 1933. Where mother's flowers grew, no doubt some bootlegger came to his end, and the echo of the "plud-plud" of horses hoofs on wooden block pavements is drowned entirely now by rushing automobiles.

But when father moved from Rochester to Chicago, Townsend Street seemed grand to our young eyes. Only a short walk to La Salle Street, where St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church and School stood, and only a block or so farther to Lincoln Park—then a cemetery—at the North boundary of the city. There, in the shadows of prim old grave-stones, we played at "ghosts"—a game that sent alternating thrills of adventure and chills of apprehension down our boyish spines. Another glorious play-ground was on North State—the ruins of an old brewery. This gave us a setting for German castles and feuds.

The blue waters of Lake Michigan lay only a few blocks to the East, but in 1860 it had practically never been discovered. Where Oak Street beach now gathers its thousands of bathers onto its golden bosom, then rose mounds of sand and hummocks of coarse grass, while over this desolation hung the stale smell of dead fish tossed up onto the beach. Only when the Lady Elgin sank off the shore of lower Wisconsin, did the lake register upon our minds. It immediately became a power, a mystery and a menace. We much preferred the prairies beyond the western bounds of the city, that were so sunny and where wild strawberries abounded. Or the far-distant slopes of the old Chicago river's North bank, dotted with arbutus and early violets.

At Pastor Hartman's school—still under my father's tutelage—I continued my education. Many of the older German-Americans in Chicago today, remember attending that seat of learning in early childhood. It was an institution of note throughout the Middle West. Later the parish moved to its present location on Fullerton Avenue, and is still known as "Old St. Pauls".

My piano and organ lessons were now augmented by violin and composition. I never cared much for the fiddle, nor especially for piano, but an organ gave me an immensity of feeling, which could not be put into words. It seemed so lofty in purpose; so noble in structure; so glorious in power. Many an afternoon, Theo and I would steal into the empty church—he to sit on the pulpit in our pastor's great carved chair, dreaming no doubt of his ministry to come, while I with legs barely reaching the huge wooden pedals, would struggle with the various "stops" and keyboards, improvising blissfully. Once my father crept in, and sitting in the silent darkness of the church, paid me the honor of remaining until my childish concert was over.

But I was not allowed to drop the other musical instruments. The piano, which seemed like pale sugar cookies beside the plum-pudding tones of my favorite pipe organ, was the A. B. C. of my education, and although I was never proficient at the violin, it nevertheless became part of my daily routine. One incident, however, soon ended my fiddling performances for all time.

Many small boys sell magazines or run errands to eke out their allowances, but I played my violin in the small orchestra at McVicker's Theatre (the first of the three theatres bearing that name) and because of my youth—I was only thirteen—and the size of the salary I earned, I became the envy of every boy on the North side. A few of the larger and older chaps took it upon themselves to threaten me, demanding that I give up my job.

For quite a while I stuck it out, scurrying to the stage-entrance in the wake of the cellist, who happened to be a man of large proportions. But one night they caught me as I was leaving the theatre to go home, and the bully of the gang struck at me with a base-ball bat. The blow, grazing my hat and landing on my nose, broke the bridge and almost blinded me. The pain and shock knocked me unconscious. This, *Cara mia*, ended my theatre engagement.

Father lost no time in reporting the assault and I believe the bully was punished in proportion to his crime, but that did not help matters with my nose, which carried a rather flattened bridge to the end of my days.

My professional career was now fully launched. I was organist at the age of fourteen at the Holy Name Cathedral—a position I held until I left for my studies abroad. Mother hesitated before she allowed her boy to enter a religious atmosphere so far removed from

her own faith, but father, caring nothing for any one belief when it came to music, allowed me to accept, and as he always got his way, I entered upon one of the happiest engagements of my youth. And may I add here, *Cara mia*, that the last church I entered, upon the Palm Sunday only a few weeks before I passed into these silent spaces, was dear, old Holy Name Cathedral.

I also had many concert engagements, for at that time there were very few children "virtuosi" and my small fame spread. One appearance was with Tom Thumb, famous dwarf of the last century. If you could have seen me on that concert stage, carrying "Mr. Thumb" in my arms onto the platform, in order to accentuate the size of a pigmy in relation to a lad of my years, you would have smiled. My father was becoming inordinately proud of my accomplishments. It was—"Mein sohn Loo'ee"—day and night. But I was never in danger of becoming spoiled, for the more he praised the harder he made me study. Thorny is the path of a musician's early youth.

In my fourteenth year the greatest sorrow of my boyhood came into my life, blotting out all ambition and joy for the time. My gentle mother died. In my grief and bewilderment I clung to Theodore. He became my only comfort in those first hard days of loss. That he undoubtedly suffered far more than the other children never entered my head. He was the oldest of the little family of five boys and to him we all turned. Father, always stern, seemed to close his heart completely. Stoical, silent and strict as ever, during those early months of his bereavement, he repelled instead of inviting our mutual condolences, and we would no more have thought of going to him for sympathy, than to one of the cold stone statues dotting the lawns of Lincoln Park.

A distant relative now came to live with us, as John and Florence were still small tots. She must have been a good house-keeper, or father would not have kept her. Our home routine continued as usual, but what this admirable relation looked like or what she said and did, never registered. She simply made no impression whatever. Only through love, *Cara mia*, can our companions enter into that realm known as memory.

They buried our mother in Graceland, that beautiful cemetery of the young growing city. It is still beautiful, with its wooded paths and old walls. Many of the graves from Lincoln Park were being transferred to Graceland, as the older burying-ground was being completely surrounded now by the rapidly spreading city. Soon it became the public park, that it has remained unto this day, with no reminder of its former character save the white mausoleum of the Couch family, and the huge stone that covers the historical grave of David Kennison, hero of the Revolution and the War of 1812.

Theo and I went often to Graceland. We took the car on North Clark Street to the end of the line, then tramped the rest of the way on foot. We usually made the trip on Saturday, taking our lunch with us. Sitting in the long grass beside the country road, that is now Irving Park Boulevard, we whispered together of our mother. With a wholesome boyish viewpoint of such things, we talked of life and death and the eternity that was to come. We had not reached the doubtor's age and our faith was that of a little child. Theodore reverently renewed his pledge given to our mother to become a minister, while I, not wishing to be outdone, planned to write a great requiem to her memory.

There is a little faded picture of my mother, *Cara mia*, in an old red plush album. Study it carefully. Below that severely parted hair, lay a brow calm and serene from her deep religious convictions and her mother-love. And under the old-fashioned folds of her funny plaid silk gown, beat the gentle heart that quieted all too soon. Old photographs give amusement to many, but I think they are touchingly beautiful. Styles so quickly change that it is not worth while to ridicule their eccentricities. It is character that remains unchanged and lasting through the passing of time.

The months that followed were uneventful. Study, small duties to perform, time for reading, hours of practice, concerts and church, simple meals and early bedtime. Father, a great disciplinarian, was also a wise, kind mentor. In after years, I realized that to him we owed our health and good habits. Our bodies were strong and our minds clean and wholesome.

But before two years had passed, another change came into our home. My father married again, and the map of our lives was decidedly altered.

This new wife—Louisa Sandway—was really a very fine woman and indeed fortunate were the younger children in having so good and kind a step-mother. She was capable, strong, wise and kind-hearted and made my father an excellent wife. But Theo, Rudy and I—the sons who had crossed the Atlantic in those far-off years—recognized only one mother—the mother who had brought us to this new country, had placed our baby feet on the path of life and who had left us only so recently. (She of the lovely name and lovelier spirit.) And remembering her with such deep affection, we could not give to this new wife as much love as did the other little sons; especially John, who was drawn to her by kindness and understanding. Later he told me of his earliest memories of this new mother (for I was away in Europe so much of the time). He can remember her feeding returning Wisconsin soldiers camping in the street in front of our home, and of her being constantly at work, sewing or cooking, for the needy in those dreadful days after the war.

Two little sons were born into this new home—only to die in infancy—and two daughters. It was strange that only the sons of Wilhelmina lived, and only the daughters of Louisa. Bertha was born in Chicago before the fire and the last child, Louise, after they had moved to Ohio (where both are living today).

But this family history must be brief, my Cara, so we will leave it here and continue to speak further of my work.

The services of a great Catholic Church take many hours of an organist's time, and I was only a young lad after all. From fourteen to sixteen were two of the busiest years of my life. I was teaching both harmony and organ, with a few piano lessons on the side, and I put in at least five hours practice a day. If ever I found a little spare time for composition, it was in my room at night, but I was usually too sleepy to do much along this line. And besides, I was never intended for a great composer. The organ-sonatas, fugues, songs and cantatas that I wrote during my sixty-five years of music, were not many. Mine was the active life of instructor and performer.

We had moved from the rapidly changing and disintegrating neighborhood of Townsend Street to the shady thoroughfare known as Oak Street. Our white-painted frame house stood on the very lot the Opera Club graces at the present time. The little park between Clark and Dearborn Streets became the new playground for my younger brothers—a quiet square, so different from today. Unity Church, with its tall spire, stood across from our rear lawn, while down the street a popular Congregational edifice vied with its neighbor each Sunday for the greater congregation. This New England church boasted of a bit of Plymouth Rock sunk into its corner-stone, and father teased the boys until they were frantic at not being able to discover its whereabouts. We were always rather chagrined over the fact that St. Pauls had no historic pebble.

On the corner of Clark and (then) Whitney Street, stood the big square house belonging to the Ogden family. On the whole, it was quite an interesting neighborhood, my Cara, with the horse-cars jogging up Clark Street toward Lincoln Park and to the left the noble old homes along Chestnut, Rush and Pine (now Michigan Avenue). To the south we could see the spires of the Catholic Cathedral, while still further on, rose the stubby turret of St. James, where a famous altar was later dedicated to the soldiers of the Civil War.

But I must go back and speak of that war, Cara mia, especially its end.

We boys talked and played at war every spare moment. Little John and Florenz were always the Johnny Rebs, while Rudolph and I were Yankees. The great difference in our ages lost the rebels every skirmish—but they never gave up.

Father's sympathies were with the Northerners. He gloried in the triumphs of his friend and hero, Carl Schurz, and regretted outwardly with loud voice that he was too old and his sons too young to serve their adopted country. Inwardly, I think he gave thanks that we were still under drafting age.

When Abraham Lincoln was shot, Chicago became a bedlam of angry, stunned and hopeless people. And when that silent, beloved body was borne back to its native State, men and women wept openly and unashamed in the city streets.

Before the burial at Springfield, the body lay in state in the old City Hall, and every boy in our neighborhood fought to sing in the choir that was hurriedly trained for the solemn service.

I was sixteen now, with a voice that had developed into a light high tenor, and knowing the choirmasters at both Holy Name and St. James, it was no trick to be counted in their groups. That I sang in that memorable service with other awed and reverent youths, was one of the proudest events of my life. Can you see it, *Cara mia*? White dresses on the little girls; black ties on the boys; muffled drums and solemn choruses; the beautiful strains of the funeral march; white faces and tears; flags drooping at half-mast, and vast crowds of heart-broken patriots. While in the midst of it all, the long, pathetic casket, holding the mortal remains of America's martyred President.

He seemed so alone, lying there, in his little oasis of everlasting sleep. But looking out over the great throng, I realized that he could never be quite alone, for love would accompany him wherever he fared.

“Alone? Within the tomb of everlasting sleep,
Where lullabies of wind and river sweep
Above his quiet rest,
While life goes on . . . resistless as the sea . . .
Sweeping the years aside eternally?
Alone . . . that martyred dead with folded hands?
No, not alone . . . beside thee . . . millions strong . . .
A Nation stands!”

But changes were coming fast, my *Cara*. Even wars fade rapidly into dim, sad memories and brother soon clasps the hand of brother, forgetting all quarrels.

Father, although an exile himself, decided that only in his native country — *das Vaterland* — should his son complete his education. Germany stood in the eyes of the world the greatest music center of Europe. There one could study with the masters of that day and remain as long as one wished. For in those times, students did not make the crossing for a few months of hurried study. It was a matter of years.

We were not wealthy, but father had saved what he could with this in mind. Theodore was to enter a Divinity School at the same time, but the expense would be much less. Many evenings were spent around our library table with pencil, paper, and no little argument, the younger boys looking on with awe.

Our church at last came to the rescue. A purse had been raised for their parishoner's ambitious son, and this with what father had saved, was enough to keep me in Germany four years.

Those were exciting days, my Cara. Music to be selected for my audition, simple clothing to be purchased, everything carefully packed (the entire family assisting) and the last tearful goodbyes and "*auf wiedersehens*" said. Then the long, last instructions from father carefully noted—grand old man that he was! I often wondered how he felt to see his son returning to that beloved *Vaterland*, to whose shores he, himself, was never allowed to return.

On November 9, 1865, a "Grand Farewell Concert" was given me at Bryan Hall. It seemed that all musical Chicago was on hand to bid me bon voyage. Friends from the Holy Name; Pastor Joseph Hartman and his entire Lutheran congregation; neighbors, fellow-students, and even strangers who had heard me play, packed to overflow that old concert hall. And so I was sent on my way!

Oh, the utter desolation and homesickness that swept over me as the train chugged over the rich prairies of Indiana and Ohio. The four years seemed a life time! En route I visited my mother's relatives in Pittsburgh. They had heard of my musical progress and I was fêted royally. A few days later I stood on the dock with mingled feelings of pride and sorrow, and sailed from the very pier where fourteen years before, I had landed on foreign soil, a fat "Dutchy" little boy, clinging to my mother's hand—a hand now stilled forever. From that moment, Cara mia, I became a man. Gone were hours of boyish play—I was entering on real adventure. Far to the West were my own loved ones, but from now on, I must travel the path alone.

Of course I was wild to go! I would see my birthplace. I would hear the great orchestras and opera companies of Europe. Germany meant music. It was the land of Beethoven and Goethe. I would feast my soul! But as the New York harbor slowly faded from sight, a great revelation swept over me, and my heart gave a wild leap in my breast. Thank God I was to return some day! Nothing could wean me away. I was not German in my soul. I loved this adopted country of mine, where my dear ones lived and where my beloved mother slept.

America! That was it—America! I had become one of her sons!



CHAPTER III

Europe

IT WAS late summer when I arrived in Hesse Darmstadt. The fields were lush from long hours of hot sunshine and baths of early dew. Between long rows of grain, blue corn-flowers lifted azure heads. Here and there red poppies lent a splash of color rivaling the setting sun. The air was aromatic.

Unter Ostend, spreading over the low hillside, looked quaint and very foreign to me as I walked up the steep village street. The rough stone houses and shops built against the curb impressed me with a sense of friendliness. Doors were widely open and upon every deep window-ledge fuchsias bloomed. The entire atmosphere of the town, *Cara mia*, breathed a gentle, humble hospitality.

At one of the smaller cottages I paused with deep emotion. They had told me at the *Kaffehaus* that here I would find Frau Maul, who had been the nurse attending my mother when her first three sons were born, and I was very anxious to see her. She had been a young woman when we left Germany—possibly thirty-six or thirty-seven—so that now she would be in her fifties. My dear mother had been greatly attached to her, often telling us of her many virtues.

A small boy, answering my knock, told me that *die Tante* was in her garden down the hillside and directed me how to find the spot. The residents of the village had their gardens quite a distance from their homes, each family owning a small plot of ground which was planted with vegetables, flowers, and shrubs, according to the choice and taste of the owner. These gardens adjoined, giving variety and naturally a friendly rivalry every season. In the early evening neighbors would stroll down the steep narrow streets leading to their *garten-platz* to gather the vegetables for the next day, to pluck a few weeds from the flower-beds, and of course to gossip.

Frau Maul did not see me approach. She was bending over her lettuce bed pulling off stray withered leaves. But when I spoke her name she rose abruptly, turned and studied my face with kindly

shrewd eyes. In silence we stood facing one another, then suddenly she cried with joy,

“I cannot be wrong! You are one of Mina Rösing’s sons!”

And flinging her arms wide, she welcomed me home.

There were Nightingales singing in the hedge behind us as we sat on the little wooden bench in that garden . . . so gorgeous an evensong as to make the heart skip a beat. In our Southern States, *Cara mia*, one hears the mocking-bird’s golden voice, but they, like other feathered folk, sing with the day and sunshine. But it takes the twilight, the early stars, or the crescent moon to inspire the nightingale, and coming at such an hour, his limpid, sweet notes create an impression of a symphony that is near to being angelic.

Far into the evening we talked. I told Frau Maul of America, of our new life and of my own musical progress. We wept together over my mother’s death. When at last I left her at the door of her stone cottage, she kissed me, saying:

“If you are not happy with your own kin, my Louis, come back to your old nurse!”

My visit to my mother’s old home was a shock and bitter disappointment. The displeasure of her parents was so clearly and heartlessly shown. That mother had married my father was bad enough. That America had claimed nearly all their children was still worse. But that Mina had died in that far-off, alien country was the blow that had crushed their spirit and affection. I was a *Falk—ya wohl*, it was stamped on my face! I was a musician like my father—*lieber Gott*, what a tragedy! They received me coldly, haughtily, and with cruel indifference. I tried to find one spark of the gentleness and love that my mother possessed, but it was not there. They were still wealthy, respected, and as proud as they had been in their youthful years, but they had not grown old with grace and they were hopelessly old-fashioned. We talked automatically for awhile and then I was ceremoniously ushered out.

“That night, *Cara mia*, I slept under my nurse’s humble roof, deep in one of her hand-plucked duck-feather beds, sheltered and content in the warmth of her faithful love. I never saw my grandparents again!

From Darmstadt I went direct to Cassel, there to present my letters of introduction and play before the great master, Dr. Wilhelm Volekmar of Homberg. That he accepted me as a pupil was gratifying, for there were many who enviously sought the honor, but the master could not give time to all.

For two years I studied with Dr. Volekmar, and as it was only a matter of a short ride to Darmstadt and Heidelberg, some of the brief vacations I could afford, were spent in or around these picturesque old cities.

Heidelberg with its University was ever a source of wonder and joy. I knew one chap from Chicago who was a student there, and he took me into the "inner circle" of that life, that has thrilled students the world over.

Being timid of physical hurt, caused no doubt by the super-sensitiveness of my hands, I never understood the custom of duelling among the students. Now this is all past, but in those days it was impossible to walk the streets of Heidelberg without seeing young men with faces criss-crossed with scars from these honor duels. The more scars, *Cara mia*, the more the student strutted.

I roamed for hours among the old university buildings and over wooded paths of the campus. The ancient place seemed alive with long-dead students. The atmosphere was charged with the past; with echoes of love and life that once had been the pulse-beat of the famous old place of education.

The country of Hesse-Cassel was the noble, finished production of Central Germany. Winding rivers cut the green hills. Charming villages nestled in a riot of gardens. Grapes ripened on the slopes, perfuming the air. Everywhere one felt that settled, orderly completeness, as well as the beauty. In such environment must Beethoven, Schubert and Haydn have put out their best efforts. From such beauty must the poetry of Heine and Goethe have sprung. Was it any wonder, my little one, that my soul nearly burst with youthful ambition? And my dreams came true, for Dr. Volekmar promised that before I left Germany, he would arrange a concert tour of the principal cities for me, and he honorably kept his word.

From Cassel, two years later, I went to Leipzig, where I enrolled in practically every musical study known. This sounds far more terrifying than it was, for in the German conservatories of that day, one paid a stated price to enter and could take all the studies one wished. So, realizing the value of my limited funds, I decided to waste nothing. I even went back to violin lessons, and—whisper it gently behind one of your pink little baby hands—vocal lessons as well. Today a first-rate teacher would not have taken me.

My instructors at the Leipzig Conservatory were famous men of their day. Richter, Hauptman, and David, masters of their art. And foremost among them was Carl Reinecke, at that time Conductor of the *Gewandhaus* concerts at Leipzig.

Great teachers! Able to do wonders with an embryo musician. But stern and relentless taskmasters. From the day of matriculation every hour was spent in either lesson periods or long grinding practice.

I roomed with a chap who was specializing in piano, and who became one of the really famous pianists of Europe and America. But when I knew him best he was simply "Barney" to me, and just as penurious as I was obliged to be.

We had found a *pension* in a modest home for a few pfennig and where we were allowed to cook(?) our own meals. In reality we did very little housekeeping. Coffee and a sweet roll was our breakfast; a couple of crackers our lunch. The main meal was eaten at one of the cheaper *Hofbraus* in the college town and consisted of a thick soup, black bread, cheese and of course, beer. We walked an allotted three miles each day to keep fit, either in the early dawn or in the twilight. For another pfennig or two the landlady did our washing and often darned our socks or sewed on buttons. Every cent we saved from our limited income, went into an old cracked stein on our cupboard shelf. This was a fund to be used only for concerts and opera, and then, spent judiciously.

I have often wondered, my little one, if those who pay great prices to sit in lordly boxes enjoy the music one-tenth as much as that earnest student up in his top-most seat of the cheapest balcony, especially if he has gone without a few meals to secure it. For to many, the hunger for good music will win over the hunger for food. Men never yet have lived happily by bread alone.

Our little room at the *pension*, *Cara mia*, was fearfully and wonderfully arranged. Two cots, each with a gay "pieced" quilt for a spread, faced each other across the room, with a common table between them for our candle. At the other end, next to our one wide-silled window, stood a chiffonier, which we shared. I say "shared" in great truth, for in the matter of ties, handkerchiefs, socks, et cetera, it was always the first man to the bureau drawer. Unusual, but simple when it came to haste in the dark, winter, morning hours. In the center of the room was a long ink-stained desk, where we did our lessons in composition and harmony. There were initials carved on that old flat desk, *Cara mia*. Initials of students long since gone out into the world and perhaps into the silence. And I too carved "L. F." in crooked letters, which Barney promptly baptized in ink.

My daily organ practice was done on the top floor of one of the older college buildings. On the lower floors lived the families of professors connected with the school. Every day, from two until five, I would be found on the old organ bench with a huge pile of music beside me, shutting out everything but my all-absorbing work; giving myself over to the luxury of solitude.

However, one cannot shut out sound; it penetrates even thick walls.

Below this lofty practice-room lived an old harmony teacher whom we affectionately called "Largo"—as his girth and shape of waist-line was a fearfully amusing affair. He invariably wore a faded red lounging-gown and a black silk skull-cap, and smoked a long pipe that emitted a vile odor. He was clever, stern, and prone to giving sound advice. He must have listened to all that went on around the building, for nothing escaped his old eyes and ears.

Simply let me pull out an extra loud "stop" in the old organ, or give the pedals *crescendo*, and my door would immediately open to admit *mein herr*—rank pipe and all—who would cross the room, silently puffing, select the stop that disturbed him, push it in carefully, turn and leave the room without one word to me. In fact, he never seemed to notice that I was present.

Of course, within a few moments the stop was pulled out again, and I continued with my practice. But alas for German argument! Once more the door would open, the old man would enter and the entire performance be repeated. Had I rebelled or even questioned his authority, it would have meant trouble for me in the school. I tried, however, to win him over. I continued with the stops that offended, but it brought about the same result. The old fellow simply corrected what he thought was my mistake and went out silently. At last I gave up to his inexhaustible patience and left the organ as he wished it to be.

My chum and I made few personal friends, but were always ready to join the crowd of students at the *Hofbrau*. We couldn't afford much beer in those days, but if one was very careful to keep his stein-lid down when the waiter came around, our companions never really knew whether they were being refilled or not. We ate the free pretzels and toasted everyone from the *Kaiser* down to the student's boot-black on the corner, with a rousing "*hoch!*"

On Saturday evening there was always a dance, but never being at ease with the girl students or village belles, and a wretched dancer in the bargain, I seldom cared to attend. On Sunday everyone had to go to church, but this was never a hardship because of the organ music and the famous choir.

It was to the opera and symphony orchestras, however, that my heart was continually turning. I never forgot, *Cara mia*, how I heard Wagner's immortal *Lohengrin*! It was an experience that comes but once in a lifetime.

The performance was given in Dresden, in that beautiful city's Opera House. This seemed as far away to us as heaven. By rail it was out of the question, but by a little mail boat from Torgau it was within the limitation of our purse. However, Torgau was about fifteen miles from Leipzig, and this being before the days of the automobile or even good wagon roads, except between the larger cities, we had but one choice—we walked.

It was easy to miss one day at our classes, for the *Herr Professor* encouraged just such enthusiasm as we were showing. Not daring to stop along the road for lunch, we partook of a heartier breakfast than usual, taking a few crackers and slice of cheese in our pockets to munch while we tramped. We had to cover the fifteen miles before the afternoon boat.

It was a clear, cool October day. Little clouds raced across the blue of the sky, throwing shadows on the dust of the road beneath our feet. The grapes in the vineyards we passed were waiting the first cold kiss of frost, so had not been gathered. Somewhere in a cottage a woman sang to her child. Life seemed so full of joy and love and fulfillment.

We reached the steamer in time, and with a sigh of relief sank down on her deck stools to enjoy the scenery along the Elbe. We did not mind the uncomfortable, rather dirty little boat, so wrapped were we in the dark forests and sudden patches of colorful fields or gardens on the river's bank. Several towns slid by and then at last—Dresden. I shall not try to describe my first impression of that charming city on the Elbe. Only to say, that never in later years, did such awe and ecstasy possess me. I could not speak from very joy and wonder over all I saw. So, my Cara, is youth's reaction at eighteen!

After the opera was over, we took a still dingier and smaller boat that ran only after midnight to carry freight. But Barney and I were so filled with the beauty and glory of Wagner, that we never saw the deck at all. We only looked at the stars over our heads, as we lay stretched out on the benches, trying to rest a bit before our long walk back to Leipzig. Neither of us could sleep. We were still hearing that immortal prelude.

From Torgau we walked the long fifteen miles again. All through the rest of the night and the grey hours of dawn we trudged, that we might not miss another day at our classes. And at nine o'clock, we staggered in to the halls of the conservatory, without even the time for our breakfast coffee.

Tired? I fell asleep in class, Cara mia, half-way through a counterpoint example. Only the sharp click of a pencil on my ear woke me up. But when I explained to my irate professor what had caused this unusual drowsiness he became delightfully sympathetic and sent me home for a two-hour recess in which to take a brief nap and snatch a bit of lunch.

But oh, that Wagner evening in Dresden, my little one! Some-day you too will understand the great power of the master; will sympathize with the woes of Elsa and Elizabeth; will thrill to the fatal "Twilight" that fell upon the ancient gods, and will weep with tragic Isolde. Can you not see us that long-ago night in Dresden? Bending over in our high gallery seats to watch the great audience far below us? They resembled a garden of variegated bloom—all color, light and perfume. Gay parties in the circle of curtained boxes. Soldier, Diplomat, Royalty. From our high perch the orchestra resembled a mound of black swarming insects, with glistening antennae, that were the brass instruments. The artists on the stage seemed like little pigmies in a puppet show. But oh, the music! That glorious roll of sound sweeping from the pit and surg-

ing up into the very dome of the opera house. I closed my eyes dizzy with ecstasy.

Wagner! Creator of musical drama! Past master of human emotion tuned to the rhythm of great orchestration! Interpreter of life, love and death!

.

So passed the months. So ran the years. It seemed but the flight of a dream before my four years of study were over and it was time for me to go home.

I was now nearly twenty-one. I had lost my freckles and most of my awkwardness. I grew taller, thinner, and more of a blonde than a red-head. My new German clothes were baggy and poorly fitted, while my shoes were bought for durability and not for style. But my hands were entirely satisfactory, *Cara mia*, for they were supple and the fingers long. They could reach from one organ manual to another with ease, and never fumbled over intricate passages. If I ever had so much as a scratch on my fingers, I would actually suffer. They had a sensitiveness beyond the average. A dancer's soul lies in his rapid feet; a singer's in his throat. My soul lay in my long, nervous, supple fingers.

By the time I reached my graduation, I had absorbed the German musician's life completely—it is a wonder that I ever went back to the States. Four years in the musical center of the world does something to you. You become a part of its very existence. But home lay across the wide ocean—home, father, and my young brothers. Yes, and the dear people of Chicago who had helped to give all this to me, and who were eagerly awaiting my return.

Only one person in all Germany came to see me graduate from the Leipzig Conservatory, *Cara mia*—Frau Maul, my dear old nurse. Having her there seemed like my own mother's blessing. My grandparents had passed out of my life, I did not miss them very much, I admit. Only when love comes unasked is it desired. Let them have their pride, their family coat of arms—which is a very lovely thing for you to cherish, my little one—their lineage from old Falkenburg baronic days, and their wealth, thought I. They could not vision all the richness of life that I possessed through my music—in my long, thin fingers. A signet ring of the Von Falkenburgs came to America, *Cara mia*, but as a second son I never owned it. What became of it, I never knew.

The voyage home seemed slow and almost endless, for once on my way, I was wild with impatience to be home. I was proud of my successful concert-tour. I had warm letters from famous instructors, great sheafs of autographed music, a bag full of presents for my dear ones, a large blue ring on my first (!) finger, and—shades of Teutonic influence—a large blonde moustache on my upper lip! And so I returned to Chicago!

CHAPTER IV

1869-1871

I was scarcely prepared for the changes that awaited me in Chicago upon my return. The city had grown so rapidly in the four years of my absence. And not alone in size, but in beauty and dignity as well. The quiet avenues were bordered with shade trees and neat little front yards all exactly alike. Houses were varied from "Queen Annes" to "Brown Stone Fronts" with sidewalks that also differed with the level of the lot, raising some and lowering others, so that one had a feeling of going up and down little hills—which after all was not so bad, *Cara mia*, in a very flat country.

The business section—never dreamed of as "The Loop" in those days—had changed so rapidly and so materially during my absence, that I felt almost a stranger in my own home town. A fine new hotel had sprung up on Randolph Street, and two large department stores. Over the block or asphalt pavements of the main residential streets, sedate phaetons, dignified surreys or rakish tetering cabs passed in endless procession, drawn by horses of every rank and condition from smart, shining "spans" to a single, plodding, old family nag. Now and then a gentle Shetland pony would join the others, my little one, to be the envy of every child that saw it pass.

Michigan Avenue had grown beyond its boundary at 12th Street, as had Wabash Avenue with its "elegant" homes and "noble" ehurches. They reached far (?) out into the new "South Side"—in fact beyond the "twenties." In 1864 the Illinois Central's last local stop was the 16th Street Station, from the steps of which, one could look far over the sandy prairies to a distant Convent, where I had trudged twice a week, crossing a stile at what is now 22nd Street, to give lessons in harmony to young pupils whose families were connected with the Holy Name parish, where I was organist. I picked up more burrs on these walks, *Cara mia*, than you will probably see in your entire life-time.

There will be so many books for you to read of early Chicago, and so many lovely old prints to admire, that I need not take the

time to speak of all this. As a school girl you must go to The Chicago Historical Society where you will find more of interest than I could ever give to you. But of that early, intimate musical life, that will be so soon forgotten, I can tell you much, for it was the very food upon which my soul was fed.



After the few weeks I allowed myself to visit relatives and friends, I entered into the business for which I had been so thoroughly trained. Pupils came in astonishing numbers to me, as well as concert engagements. I was offered the position of organist in Unity Church on the corner of North Dearborn and *Whitney Streets, where Dr. Robert Collyer was the minister. As he had founded the church after his exit from the Methodist faith and because of its spectacular growth and popularity of its preacher, my Lutheran relatives rebelled at my serving so new and strange a religion. I really believe, *Cara mia*, that they feared for the salvation of my immortal soul. And I am sure they thought the jolly minister would some day grow horns. But as I was now of an age where I could take care of my own soul and run my own affairs, I accepted the offer gladly and became a staunch admirer and friend of the famous and popular Dr. Collyer. I remained at Unity Church until the great fire of '71, revelling in that noble old pipe-organ and the spacious aisles of the fine old church. During that last spring I gave weekly organ recitals, drawing flattering crowds from all parts of the city, at which popular vocal and violin artists of that day assisted.

I was now beginning to acquire the reputation of an exceptionally good organist—an honor which I fervently hope I deserved! There were many reasons for this. I was newly returned from Europe, where I had made a concert tour with no small success. I could teach the “pipe organ”—as it was called—with understanding, as well as the many difficult branches of musical theory. And above all this—I loved my work. May I humbly quote, my *Cara*, from one of Chicago’s well-known newspapers?

“Mr. Falk was one of the first to make organ concerts popular in Chicago and the Middle-west. He has probably given more of this sort of entertainment than any living musician in this country. His playing is characterized by great brilliancy, combined with the utmost ease in manual pedal dexterity. In the matter of producing beautiful and novel effects in combinations of stops, his reputation is the highest.”

I only write of this, *Cara mia*, for you to know and treasure as part of your own inheritance. For remember, my dear child, that no one stands alone on the heights; there are many others who share honors. No one person receives all of God’s great blessings, for He has a way of distributing His gifts.

* Walton Place.

ORGAN RECITAL

AT

Unity Church,

(Corner of N. Dearborn & Whitney Sts.)

ON

Sunday, May 7. 1871,

at 3 1-2 O'clock P. M.

MISS CARRIE GOLDSTICKER, Soprano.
 MR. THOMAS GOODWILLIE, Baritone.
 MR. LOUIS FALK, Organist.

PROGRAMME.



PART I.

- Grand Voluntary*,..... *Wely*
 MR. LOUIS FALK.
- Air, "With pious Hearts",*
Recl. & Air, "Arm Arm ye Brave", ... Handel
 (Judas Maccabaeus.)
 MR. THOMAS GOODWILLIE.
- Andante*,..... *Beethoven*
 MR. LOUIS FALK.
- "Ruth and Naomi",* *Toptiff*
 MISS CARRIE GOLDSTICKER.

PART II.

- Offertoire, }*
Prayer, }..... *Batiste*
 MR. LOUIS FALK.
- Air from "La Favorite",*..... *Donizetti*
 MISS C. GOLDSTICKER.
- Overture,* *Auber*
 MR. LOUIS FALK.

COMITTI & LOEHR, Job Printers, 114 Randolph St.

PROGRAM

Concert: Unity Church, 1871

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA

And now I come to my life-long friend—probably the one closest to me in my sixty years of music in Chicago. I refer to Dr. Florenz Ziegfeld, founder of the Chicago Musical College and patron of all the arts.

Dr. Ziegfeld was born in Jever, Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, Germany. His father had occupied an official position at Court and his son had received an unusually fine education. His title of "Doctor" was a medical degree, but he never practiced this profession, preferring music to all else. He was a fine pianist and became quite a famous teacher of that instrument. He was also a Lutheran and a Mason.

In 1867 Dr. Ziegfeld had started a school known as the Academy of Music, the headquarters of which was in the Ziegfeld home on Wabash Avenue. But this did not grow into the great institution he had anticipated. He wanted a conservatory of musical learning that would conform with the ideals of Europe. Surely the time was ripe for a greater venture, so upon my return to Chicago he called a meeting of his teachers and a few close friends to hear his extensive plans and join him in enlarging the school already begun.

Can you go back with me, Cara mia, to that high-ceilinged room known as "the back parlor" in the Ziegfeld home? Can you visualize the tall windows with tasseled drapes of red plush? The great book-cases and huge desk? The center gas-lamp with ornate crystals hung in garlands around a painted china shade? And the gallery of old-world portraits on the papered walls?

We sat around the marble-topped table—men like W. L. Tomlins and John Root—listening to the brusque voice so filled with fervor and determination that it swept us all into a vortex of enthusiasm. And before we parted that night, the famous old school—still in existence—was begun. The Chicago Musical College, with Dr. Florenz Ziegfeld as its President.

For nearly two years we continued to have the headquarters in the Ziegfeld home—both parlors being in daily use. My organ lessons were given in the church where I played, but all instruction in musical theory and composition was given at the house. I would often teach a harmony lesson to the accompaniment of baby feet, as Flo. Jr. and Carl played in the bedrooms above. The other children were not then born.

In the spring of 1871 we took the school to the Crosby Opera House and were there when the city burned that next October. But in less than three weeks following this great disaster, we opened our doors once more at 800 Wabash, where we remained until we took quarters in the fashionable Central Music Hall, famous center for the greatest concerts this city has ever known.

Dr. Ziegfeld crossed to Europe every summer during the vacation of the school, bringing back some of the most famous instructors of

the old world. In those early days he added to the Faculty names like August Hyllested, Scandinavian pianist; L. Gaston Gottschalk, brother of the composer; Dudley Buck, who later went to Brooklyn; Emil Liebling and later S. E. Jacobsohn, who had been concertmeister with the Thomas Orchestra in the east in 1872. In the year 1887 the president's oldest son, Florenz, Jr.—then a young man in his early twenties—became the treasurer of the school, where he remained until the stage called him to become one of the world's greatest producers.

In 1897 the College moved to a beautiful new building of its own on Michigan Avenue. From then it grew in size and fame until it stood at the top of the list of great American schools of music. During those days following the World's Fair, many other famous teachers came into the faculty. Bernard Listemann, great violinist from Boston; Arthur Friedheim and Hans von Schiller, celebrated pianists; William Castle and Mrs. O. L. Fox, heading the vocal department, and later Edward Moore, Herman Devries, Adolph Mühlmann, Adolph Brune, Felix Borowski and Rudolph Ganz. And some of the names of the pupils, who graduated from this great school . . . Gena Branscombe, Arthur Rech, Clare Osborne Reed, Leon Marx, Arthur Hand and many, many others; some to found new schools, and others to take their talent onto the concert stage.

But I am far ahead of my story, Cara mia, and you will weary of all this detail. I must return to 1871 and to the beginning of another famous institution, which sprang into life from the ashes of a burned city—The Apollo Club. Your great-grandfather was one of the charter members, Cara mia, and also the accompanist for the concerts. Silas G. Pratt was president and George Upton conductor, while in the fine chorus were many of the greatest singers of that day. Later W. L. Tomlins took the baton, holding the position of conductor for over twenty-five years. During the first season the club brought to the city the Theodore Thomas Orchestra for four concerts, and—(quote) “from these concerts dates the history of orchestra in Chicago.”

In 1921 The Apollo Club celebrated its golden anniversary with five remaining charter members as guests of honor, Philo Otis, Charles C. Curtiss, Dr. E. H. Pratt, Warren C. Coffin and myself. It was a strange experience, my Cara, to be seated in Orchestra Hall listening to new voices and new musicians playing the accompaniments, in an atmosphere charged with memories fifty years old. Even Harrison M. Wild, who conducted in later years, was absent. Only five old men, reminiscent and sad, while the present Apollo Club went on without them. But the chorus is safe in the able hands of Edgar Nelson, and should continue its worthy existence for many, many years to come.

The Thomas Orchestra grew in popularity with every passing



DR. FLORENZ ZIEGFELD

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA

year. Theodore Thomas, Dr. Ziegfeld and I were three old German pals. Many a night we sat over our steins of beer and discussed the future of music in Chicago. A memorial is placed opposite Orchestra Hall on Michigan Avenue, in honor of that great conductor, and when you are older, *Cara mia*, stand before it in silence for a moment, remembering that men like Thomas can never, never die.

The orchestra still exists under the leadership of another of my dear friends, Frederick Stock, being called in these days The Chicago Symphony Orchestra. It is one of the city's greatest assets and God grant that the people of Chicago will never let this famous institution go, my *Cara*, for with the laying down of those instruments, will also go Chicago's divine heritage of music.

Have I given you a bit of history—not too dry I trust—of the start of these three great institutions of music in Chicago? I hope so, my little one. For although the later years may prove more interesting, the start is always deep-rooted and strong—as a tree, that first must grasp the soil, so that it may in some future day, put on the foliage and fruit of fulfillment and beauty.

Which brings us to the great fire of '71—an event so tremendous, that my entire family life, my work and my interests, changed with unbelievable swiftness—overnight!

CHAPTER V

The Great Fire

CHICAGO is so well versed in the great tragedy that took place in the early part of its history—"the fire of '71"—that it would be quite ridiculous for me to attempt a word picture, when so many canvases have already been painted. But to give you my personal experience, Cara mia, during those terrible hours of the disaster that befell our city in the 38th year of her life, might color it more indelibly in your memory.

We were still living on Oak Street and I was still the organist of Unity Church. Peace and contentment had followed the chaos and agony of the Civil War. The city had grown rapidly and waxed prosperous. It was so new, so very happy, so proud—and then came October ninth, that you now know as "Chicago Day."

I cannot remember how the first warning of danger was brought to me—whether I was with my family at the time, with Dr. Collyer, or at my organ—but I can remember all that followed very clearly. There was a sudden something in the air—a great murmur, that resembled nothing more than the distant low voice of a mighty surf beating against a rocky coast; a murmur that grew with every second that passed, so loud and so near, that I went out into the street to listen. The air was hot and smelled acrid, even though a strong wind swept it along. To the west I could see a huge cloud—a pall—hanging like a grey veil over the city, and as I listened, the advancing murmur became a roar.

Many other people were on the side-walks, while drivers had stopped their frightened horses to watch the unusual scene. There were no telephones in those days, my Cara, and of course no radios. We waited in restless groups talking together in frightened helplessness, speculating on the terror that was so rapidly pressing down upon us through the blackness of the night.

Then suddenly it came. Red and orange shot through the grey; smoke turned to flames; the hot air stung at our throats and brought tears to our eyes. Some woman screamed. Another shouted "Chicago is burning up!" Panic was upon us. A terror that was born

of stark human fear. And then came that great rush of thousands of feet as men and women thought of their loved ones and their own safety. Some kept their heads; others fought; some were injured.

I ran to my home with a great fear pounding in my heart.

I found the family aroused and dressing frantically in whatever they could lay their hands on. My step-mother delayed so long in getting her little family out, that she left the place clad only in a "wrapper"—as the tea-gown of that day was humbly called. My brother John carried two bird-cages housing the pet canaries. I later heard that the bottom fell out of one of these, allowing the poor frightened bird to escape and to perish in the smoke, but the other cage held and that historical canary lived another three years.

The mother and younger children fled to the North, hoping to reach the shelter of Lincoln Park. But the fire was all around them and the wooden pavement blocks were burning in places, so that they were obliged to turn back to the near-by Washington Square, where other of our neighbors were huddled. Here my brother Rudolph built a lean-to of boards for a covering and there the members of my family watched the catastrophe about them with horror and actual acute suffering. For there was no hope of escape just then. There they had to remain until churches and houses were gutted and nothing but grey ashes covered the place that once they called home. Food there was none. One of the boys milked some cows they found roaming in the streets, while another rescued preserves from out of a cellar after the rest of the house had been destroyed. This last was too sweet, and caused great discomfort. The cry was for water, as the smoke was making people frantic with thirst. Everyone had red, blood-shot eyes and swollen tongues. Children cried constantly in mother's arms. Families were separated and many old people died from exposure and lack of care. Cattle, horses, dogs, cats, roamed the streets together, driven by a great common fear and suffering.

The old Ogden house stood in a block-square lot covering Whitney, Oak, Clark and Dearborn. Great elms surrounded it. As the fire crept nearer, several men of the family and neighbors whose own homes were gone, tried to save it. The caretaker brought blankets wrung out in cistern water, which were laid on the already smoking roof, while others beat at the walls with wet sacks. But as the hours passed and the people huddled in the square were actually suffering from thirst, men threatened to fire the Ogden home deliberately if the precious water was not given the public instead of being used on the house.

It was out of an old cistern, Cara mia, and smelled to the skies, but oh, how good that water tasted to our parched throats! We drank it gratefully and my brothers slept a little, cuddled together in the lean-to with their mother.

Meanwhile, father had thought of his one great treasure in the home. It was strange, my little one, that although the fire was all about us that awful night, our house did not burn until the next day. So when it was apparent that we would have time to return to it, father decided to rescue our piano.

What follows may seem strange in your day, *Cara mia*, but in '71 it was the exception—not the rule—to own such a fine instrument as ours. It was a Hallett and Davis concert Grand, a very large and beautiful piano made especially for Mr. Davis' daughter. Twice it had been moved from our home to the Crosby Opera House for concert performances at the earnest solicitation of W. W. Kimball, local representative for Hallett and Davis.

Our parlor, as it was called in those days, was a very long room—some seventy feet, divided by an arch—and covered with a Brussels carpet. The piano was turned on its side and after the carpet was ripped up and placed down the outside stairs, the great instrument was allowed to slide down onto the side-walk. There it was carried—or half-dragged—to the corner of Dearborn and Oak Streets, with its rear leg facing a large brick house, where it was covered with the carpet. Yet the terrific heat from that burning house was intense enough to scorch the leg.

I anticipate your question, *Cara mia*. Yes, dear, the piano was saved—probably the only one on the North-side to come through the fire—but my father's hand was sadly crippled from the strain of lifting the great instrument, for in some way the ligaments were badly torn and he was never able to straighten those two fingers again. Which ended his organ playing.

There was a terrific gale blowing all that night and the smoke and heat were almost unbearable. John dug a hole by a tree in order to breathe in some moisture from Mother Earth, but he was not successful, as the ground was dry and powdery. There had been no rain for many weeks.

And so for two nights and two days, my family were out in the fire-swept area, battling pitiful discomforts, and seeing their home destroyed before their very eyes.

I was not with them that second day. Father and I remained together at least until afternoon. I recall helping many neighbors save a few pitiful belongings, in cases where the flames had not yet reached their homes. The brick house near which our piano stood, burned last, but was earliest vacated. I remember it well; beautifully furnished with large pier-glass mirrors reaching the floor. Inside its walls I found temporary coolness and fresher air.

Meanwhile I had remembered Dr. Collyer. I rushed to his home next to the church, and found him busily carrying his books across the little lawn into the church study. He looked up at me with a brave, cheery smile.

"This big stone building will stand, Louis,"—he said reassuringly, "even if the roof should burn."

And so we worked together in that stifling heat, carrying armfuls of books exquisitely bound and many famous pictures, in to the cooler shelter of the old stone church. My own music, too, was transferred from home to what we thought was safety. Music that I had purchased so proudly in Leipzig; music autographed by my famous teachers abroad. But alas for man's judgment and effort against a power of destruction! Unity Church burned to a skeleton of stones and greying ashes before the sun rose the next morning.

Gone were the books that Dr. Collyer prized so highly! Gone, my cherished music. Gone, my beloved organ! Gone was my home on Oak Street, with the many intimate associations that are part and parcel of family life. And gone was the greatest part of my city—for Chicago was literally burned upon the pyre of its own foundations that day and night of October—and I stood weeping, unashamed, as I saw her perish before me!

But my family needed food and I knew of a friend who would help us if I could reach him. This in mind, I turned hopefully toward the south, crossing the bridge at Rush Street with the milling, sweeping, wailing mass of humanity. Thousands were separated from their loved ones. Men were carrying other men's children to keep them from being crushed under foot. Here and there came a horse and wagon loaded with furniture and personal belongings, but in most cases the frantic carried their own goods in their arms, or threw it away altogether. An artist living at that time painted a great picture of the fire, that he labelled "Rush Street Bridge." In it he pictured his many friends, as they crossed from the North to the South sides over the old bridge that morning. On this canvas, Cara mia, he painted your great-grandfather, crowded in with the mass of men and women about half-way over the span. This picture hung in the old Relic House on North Clark Street for many years, but when they tore that famous building down, the picture passed into private hands unknown to me. Of course the artist did not see me on the bridge, my Cara, but he needed faces well-known to give his painting realism and to create interest in his work.

It took me two hours and a half to reach the West side and almost four to return, but I carried food for my family—the first they had eaten in twenty-four hours. I had bread and sausages, given to me by my good friend on Madison Street. What a pleasure to see my younger brothers eat, and to know that we were at least alive after our terrible experience!

All this time my eldest brother Theodore was living in Davenport, Iowa, where he and a cousin were running a newspaper. In years since, I have often smiled over this, as the paper was a Demo-

eratic organ, while my entire family were staunch Republicans. Possibly that is why the enterprise failed.

The morning of the second day (Tuesday) mother was taken over to the West side in safety. The night before had been bitterly cold and with nature's strange irony it had rained. After fire had ravished a city, relief came too late! But now that the pavements were cooling they could take their time in crossing to a safe part of town. Theodore had come into Chicago, frantically trying to locate us. Tuesday night he returned to Davenport with John and baby Florenz, to care for them until our parents were settled in a home once more.

But I was not with my family when they left Washington Square. In some way we became separated that last night. With others, I found myself on the Lake front, carried there no doubt by the rush of the pushing crowds.

You wonder, Cara mia, why we did not all try to make the shores of the lake, where fresh water might have been had? The pavements were burning remember, and we were cut off on all sides. Besides, to reach the shore in those days meant walking over weeds and uneven sands. It seemed very far away.

That second night I slept on the beach with thousands of other homeless Chicagoans. The sand seemed soft to my tired body and I fell asleep immediately from utter exhaustion and despair. Moving crowds of people stumbled or stepped over me, but nothing disturbed me that night. My world had burned up and there was no need for me to awaken!

But with the late afternoon of the next day I opened my eyes wearily, wondering where I was and how I got there. Slowly the awful truth came home to me and I sat up at once and looked about. Everywhere people were sitting or lying on the sand. Some were in huddled groups; some alone like myself. Behind me to the west, the fire still burned, but the wind had died down and the smoke was lifting. I figured that I was about opposite Washington Street and that the fire was checked in the northern part of the city. I wondered how much of the town had escaped, and after talking to another man sitting near me, found that nearly all of the South-side had been saved. Little did I know, Cara mia, that your great-grandmother—safe in her aunt's home at Michigan and Polk Street—had driven down with her uncle that first morning to watch the conflagration from the safe (?) vantage point of Adams Street and the Lake. How little she knew that somewhere in that flaming furnace was the man who some day would be her husband and companion for fifty long happy years.

After I had watched the crowds for awhile, I realized that I was hungry. My neighbor directed me to a soup kitchen, where he

had already eaten. It was a long walk, past burned buildings and sunken streets, but at last I reached it and was served with strong black coffee and slices of unbuttered bread. This impromptu restaurant was run by the good women of some little Mission church. Soup, coffee, bread, and milk for babies was all they offered, but it saved many lives that terrible week and gave new courage to many a broken spirit. Fresh water was a luxury, for the city's water-mains were destroyed. Men and women drank out of the lake and carried the water away in buckets. Milk and beer and even a diluted cheap wine commanded exorbitant prices. But fresh vegetables and fruits were coming in from the farms, as well as eggs and meat from the markets, so that in a few days the business of feeding the city was well organized. People were kindly, courteous and sympathetic to one another, for a common disaster, my little one, brings out the best in human nature.

One by one the members of my family drifted over to the West side, beyond the burned area near the river, to reunite at the home of my cousin. We slept all over the house and cleaned out the pantry in no time. But good cheer was in the air, for we were all together again and Chicago was already setting her face toward the future. It was impossible to crush her courageous spirit. Everywhere little wooden signs sprung up, stating that here "so-and-so" would re-build. Business-firms, such as Lyon and Healy, incorporated in 1856, churches, homes—building with new pride and determination. It was impossible to remain discouraged in the face of such faith.

But father never recovered from his losses. It seemed as if he could not make a new start. Pastor Hartman's church and school had burned and was being re-built slowly. My brother Theodore was now married and Rudolph and I grown men able to take care of ourselves. So when the opportunity came, father accepted a position in Sandusky, Ohio, and left Chicago never to return.

It was a sad departure, my Cara. I remember father packing the pitifully few belongings left from the fire; the brave mother with her little daughter clinging to her full skirts; and my two youngest brothers. But a new home was soon begun in the Ohio city, where father was utterly content to live until his death at a wonderful old age. Several times I visited in Sandusky, usually to give a big organ concert, and on these occasions my dear father and I would go quietly into some German cafe, where, over our steins of beer and our cheese sandwiches, we would go back to early days—in Chicago—in Germany—talking—talking—on our favorite theme—music.

So the "Great Fire of '71" came and passed, bringing with it the greatest changes of my life.

CHAPTER VI

1871 - 1874

UNION PARK in 1871 was a green little square filled with splendid old trees, many colorful flower-beds and a small patch of water, all of which was surrounded by a neat iron fence elaborately scrolled. It also boasted a modest-sized Zoo, filled with the smaller variety of wild animals. That my brother Florenz had his finger bitten viciously by a raccoon prevented us from ever forgetting the place, although I must admit he was teasing the animal. There were many curving graveled paths in Union Park, where nurse-maids walked with their young charges by day and lovers strolled by night. It was the West side's popular park in the 70's—for the land that became Garfield Park was far beyond the city limits at that time.

Today, my Cara, the little square is only a breathing place in a great western area, cut through with wide boulevards, where a mad rush of automobiles hum day and night endlessly, and where the city's unemployed sit in pathetic rows on old green park benches.

With the exodus of homeless citizens from the burned North side, the territory around the cross streets of Washington and Ashland became the new center of fashionable Chicago for the following twenty-five years. Prominent families built or bought homes and joined the church and club life of that part of the city. Only the World's Fair in 1893 was able to swing the procession southward again and later to the north, from where the circle began.

The Carter Harrison home stood at the corner of Jackson and Ashland surrounded by a large yard, where many a fashionable "lawn-party" was given. A block further north at the corner of Adams lived Allan Pinkerton, famous for his work during the Civil War in the Secret Service Department and the head of a great detective agency bearing his name. His ten children lived to hear their father's name echoed 'round the world and in Chicago today lives the most beloved of his family, Mrs. William J. Chalmers, who was "Joan" to us, in those early West side days. General Fitz Simonds was a neighbor of the Pinkertons, whose fine old house remained long

after the tide swung south. Dr. Ziegfeld, whose home had burned in the down-town section, lived just around the corner on Adams Street; a home that remained in the family and from which they refused to move even to this day; for dear old "Madam" Ziegfeld only died this last year, in the 84th year of her age.

On Washington Street other families had established themselves in fine new homes. The Arthur Farrars owned a square brick house filled with costly objet d'art from all parts of the world. They drove a span of horses that was a joy to behold as they pranced down the street with other horse-drawn vehicles in that day before the automobile. But to the city-bred children, their Jersey cow, kept in the wide stable behind the house, was the greatest sight in the neighborhood—next to a circus. Down the block were other families of note, names still familiar on the lips of Chicagoans living at the present time.

Two Clubs sprang up in this new center; the Illinois on Ashland, and much later, the Ashland, on Washington near Leavitt.

The old Brown school on Warren and Wood Streets probably housed more youngsters that became the prominent men and women of our city today, than any other building of learning. They still hold alumni reunions.

But without doubt the churches were the social centers of that period, for in those days whole families attended and were frankly proud of the fact. The Church of the Epiphany stood at Ashland and Adams; a beautiful building facing west. Down at the bias intersection of Ogden Avenue was the Third Presbyterian with Dr. Witherow as pastor, while across Union Park rose the fancy twin turrets of Zion Temple, the Jewish Synagogue—of which I will speak later. But it is the Union Park Congregational Church at the intersection of Ashland and Washington—still standing unchanged by the passing of the years—of which I wish to tell you, my Cara, for this dear old building was the center of my home life for over a quarter of a century.

Almost immediately following the fire I was offered the position of organist at this church, which I gladly accepted and held for twenty-seven busy, long, years. Of course, Cara mia, the Chicago Musical College went right on in spite of the great catastrophe, so that your great-grandfather did not have to make a new start as so many did. But in "Old Union Park"—as the church was affectionately known in later years—I made lasting friendships that bound me closely to this locality; friendships only second to those in my musical world. It was there I met, loved, and married your great-grandmother; there that our only daughter came into the home; there my greatest success was attained. So altogether it was probably the happiest twenty-seven years of my life. The church's congregation has changed with the passing of time and rapid growth of the city,

but like an immortal guardian of the past, it rises sublime over the disintegration of the park it faces, with its one slender spire pointing heavenward, as if calling to all men to witness the everlasting service to the needs of mankind and the faith of its forefathers.

On October 3rd, 1872—one short year after the great fire—a fine Testimonial Concert was given for me at Union Park Congregational Church. This was a very popular type of concert in the latter part of the last century, and was considered a high mark of recognition and honor. Dr. Ziegfeld and all my college “cronies” attended as well as the entire neighborhood, so that we had a packed church and splendid press notices.

Dr. C. D. Helmer, formerly of Milwaukee, was the minister of Union Park. He was a great organizer and fine preacher, but better still, a gentle soul who lived his profession with sincerity and simplicity. He died all too soon and probably no other clergyman of this city was mourned by his congregation as was this beloved pastor. But I am running ahead of my story.

My brother Theodore lived just around the corner from the church in a charming cottage. He had recently married Julia Dumser. Their home was filled with an atmosphere of contentment, love and simple living, and it was a constant joy that I was welcomed into the circle for it always reminded me of another home so long ago, with my own dear mother as the guardian spirit. Theo never let me feel crowded out, even when the babies began to come. They had seven fine children, Cara mia; six boys and one girl.

I have said that a promise to our mother had caused Theodore to study for the ministry, but not wholeheartedly. All his life his desire was to give all of his time to art, his favorite line being designing, illustrating, and the most delicate pen and ink illuminating. Although he was an ordained pastor of the Lutheran faith, he followed his favorite vocation for over forty years, owning a most successful printing establishment—first on the West and later on the North side of the city. He put out the catalogues for the Chicago Musical College for many years, also music of the local composers and most of the concert programs. All hand illuminating he did himself.

In 1873 the Inter-State Industrial Exposition was held in Chicago, in a building considered enormous at that time. (Length, 800 feet; width, 260, and oval dome 160 feet long.) I wrote the “Grand Exposition March” for the occasion, dedicating it to “Potter Palmer Esq.”—who was president of the exposition—and my brother Theo illustrated and published the work.

(Twenty years later came the World’s Fair, and after sixty years, A Century of Progress.)



COVER OF MUSIC

Grand Exposition March, 1873

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA

You will find this music—now strange to modern eye—somewhere in your grandmother's home, together with a small book of songs that I wrote in 1874, charmingly illustrated by your great-uncle Theodore. There are other compositions of mine and also early music—both organ and vocal—used in days I am now writing to you about. There being no radios, Cara mia, music rendered in the home was the highest sort of social entertainment. Wherever I went, it was considered the finest compliment to my ability to invite me to play. But unfortunately for me, it could never be an organ. This is the advantage a singer or violinist has over a musician whose instrument is "nailed down"! So it fell to me to use the family piano—not always in good tune.

But I must hasten on to a very important part of my life, Cara mia.

Among the members of the Union Park Congregational Church was a family that had followed Dr. Helmer down from Milwaukee to this city—James B. Dickinson, his wife, two daughters and a little son.

They had come West from New York—the beautiful section known as Ausable Valley in the Adirondacks. Mr. Dickinson took his family first to the lumber country near Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, then to Milwaukee, and after another two years in Geneva, Illinois, on the Fox River (where they lived during the "Great Fire") moved into the city, as near their Wisconsin friends as possible, and resided on Washington Street a few houses west of the church.

They were Congregationalists of the New England variety. The father's middle name was Brewster; he mentioned this often with just pride and could count rapidly and accurately back through nine generations to the Mayflower. (There is an old knife, my Cara, that has been handed down from generation to generation, that is supposed to have come over in that famous ship, and one of these days it will belong to you.)

Mrs. Dickinson was Caroline Dayton by birth, but her line ran back only as far as the sober Ralph Dayton who had assisted in founding New Haven, Connecticut. There was a friendly rivalry between husband and wife over the merits of early ancestry, that became more and more exciting as the arguments progressed. Each had Colonial ancestors "under the crown"; Revolutionary and War of 1812 soldiers, and of course plenty of elders, deacons, ministers, or at least "Pillars of the Church." Later I joined in these pleasant controversies, most casually "throwing a monkey wrench into the works" by mentioning with a politely stifled yawn a certain Falkenberg Castle and Coat of Arms, that my family possessed in Germany. From that day on, the Mayflower and New Haven accepted the distant romantic "Castle" and all went on happily together.

Mrs. Dickinson was a patrician to her finger-tips; a gentlewoman to the manner born. She was an accomplished musician, playing the piano well—especially Beethoven and Chopin; a talented artist who painted landscapes in the truly mid-Victorian style; did exquisite needle-work, and wrote sentimental but charming poetry. Their home reflected its stately mistress and was run with a smoothness that bespoke a stern, though kindly, hand at the wheel. Into this home of perfect clock-work running order, entered the gentle personality of the master of the house; a man of so winning a nature, that his friends were unlimited in number, and loyal in devotion and respect. They were a well-balanced couple.

The two daughters of this household were as different as a crimson rose from a tall day-lily. The elder was dainty, petite and a vivid brunette; the Irish type, with blue eyes and midnight hair. The younger was as tall as her stately mother, a blonde, blue-eyed in lighter hue than her sister and had a skin that was like alabaster. Each was beautiful in her way and with two such attractive daughters it was small wonder that this New England family became popular in the social life of the neighborhood. The elder girl had a lovely soprano voice, much sought after for all musical affairs of the church. Her younger sister had a decided talent for art. The little boy was too young at this time to cause me to notice him, save that he was a blonde lad and had mischief in his blue eyes. There was never a time when he and his younger sister were not ready for some sort of prank.

Mrs. Dickinson was a devout lover of a pipe-organ, often referring to it as "the king of instruments," so it was not a bit surprising that she became one of my staunchest admirers. She was also very ambitious for her elder daughter, who was studying vocal at the College where I was on the Faculty. It was to this ambitious mother that I owed the romance that came into my life.

On one Sunday morning, following a lengthy service, I found her patiently waiting for me in the church aisle. I came down from the organ loft rather weary and probably eager for my sister-in-law's good Sunday dinner. But always recognizing friends who had waited to see me, I paused, smiling into the face of this tall woman whom I knew but slightly. After holding out her hand with a few words of compliment, she said:

"Mr. Falk, I want you to know my daughter and hear her sing. We think she has a very fine voice!"

It was then I noticed a small slight figure behind her tall mother, half-hidden and rather shrinking from modesty as she heard her voice praised. The older woman caught at her hand and pulling her forward proudly but quite firmly, presented her. But before she

could speak I saw all that I needed to awaken that "something" that lifts its head but once in the human heart.

I saw the deep blue eyes—like yours, my little one—filled with a great wonder not altogether hidden by timidity. I saw these eyes fall before mine and their dark lashes droop over them. I noted the cheeks, stained with rose tints of embarrassment. I let my gaze travel down the soft lines of her petite but rounded young figure. Then, as if from some far-off place, came the matter-of-fact voice of the eager mother.

"This, Mr. Falk, is my eldest daughter, *CARA!*"

Of course you have guessed, my little one, for whom you were named.

My Cara! The loveliest woman God ever gave to a gruff, sentimental, unworthy man like myself! (in spite of all the things she said to the contrary). My Cara! She of the golden voice, the dainty ways, the exquisite beauty of mind and spirit, and withal, she of the kindly, unselfish, courageous womanhood.

From that day I became a constant visitor at the Dickinson home on Washington Street, while at the Sunday services, would watch frantically from my organ bench to see the tall mother sweep regally up the long aisle followed by her family. If Cara was there all was well and my music would take on new volume and rapidity that surprised and sometimes shocked the sedate elders and deacons who ushered the church worshippers up and down the aisles with stiff dignity and stiffer high white collars.

But I was a shy man in spite of daily contact with feminine seekers of musical training at the College. I had never entirely outgrown the timidity of my youth; those days of freckles and adolescent blushes. I called often and stayed late, but my attention was purposely directed toward my hostess and not the vivacious daughter I wished so desperately to court.

I played the piano upon request, selecting the most sentimental pieces I knew. I allowed myself to be drawn into learning Cribbage—a game Mrs. Dickinson greatly admired and played well. I talked to the father regarding business conditions and allowed young Allan, the brother of my adored one, to ask the foolish and unanswerable questions that boys are capable of. And I also drank quantities of lemonade (for Mrs. Dickinson was a teetotalar) and ate rich cake. All for the sight of two Irish blue eyes with a twinkle in them!

But as time passed the family began to realize that my visits were not motivated by cake or Cribbage. They began to leave us alone, retiring behind the plush portieres to the all-too-near "back-parlor" but allowing us at least to exchange low words, shy glances and perhaps a touch of hands over the leaves of the Family Album.

Dear old red-plush-covered Family Album! I never could remember if Aunt Susan was a Brewster or a Dayton, or Uncle Jonathan a real man or just a nice red apple. I only knew, Cara mia, that I loved this girl more than anything else in the world and if God wanted to be good to me, He would give her into my keeping for life! I had never been a religious man I fear, but I suddenly became very humble and devout, and as a concession to Mrs. Dickinson, left my Lutheran connections and joined the Congregational faith—where I remained for over fifty years or until my life's end.

But Cara Dickinson was an extremely popular young woman. All the swains of the West side were at her tiny feet; especially one man from Geneva, who seemed to be unusually favored. He was wealthy, handsome, popular and a fine dancer—all the things that I was not. At the gay entertainments where the youth of Chicago made merry, I was obliged to stand on the side-lines and watch my beloved trip by in the gay polka or schottische. And what was worse, see her gathered into the arms of various youths in the newest craze—the waltz. Mrs. Dickinson did not believe in “round dances” (what would she have thought of our dances today, Cara mia?) but allowed her children to step to the more proper music of the polka and its kind. That the quadrilles and lancers had “round corners”—when the waltz swung the couples about—she never discovered, and Cara dancing them, felt confident that she was not disobeying.

My soul was wrung with jealousy. I passed through the most exquisite of tortures; especially when the young man from Geneva was present. I am afraid I actually hated this man, and would honestly have enjoyed seeing him drawn-and-quartered or boiled in a nice big vat of boiling oil, especially after hearing a slurring remark that he had made to my adored one—laughing at my German birth, my sentimental love for poetry and music, and the blue ring I still wore on my first finger.

But you never can add to your charm by ridiculing a friend, my Cara, nor lift yourself by pulling another fellow down. I think the tide turned right then and there. I saw the Geneva suitor less and less around the Dickinson home, and sensed a growing warmth and tenderness in my dear one's attitude. Under the glow of this subtle encouragement, I took heart.

I had always been a lover of the great German poets, so I brought my Goethe and Heine when I called, to read aloud. So much can be expressed in exquisite poetry, my little one. When you are a big girl, take down the old grey-covered book of Heine's poems from your grandmother's shelf of poetry and there you will see faint pencil-marks around the verses I used to read.



MR. FALK IN 1876

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA

“Stars with golden feet are wand’ring
Yonder, and they gently weep
That they cannot earth awaken
Who in night’s arms is asleep.

.

What called yonder? In my bosom
Rings the echo of the tone.
Was it my beloved speaking,
Or the nightingale alone?”

The sentimental style of the last century? Of course it is! Yet filled with a beauty of crystal loveliness. Listen to this, my little one, and feel the deep tenderness.

.

“O smile thou not, my darling beauty,
O smile not, full of charming grace!
But weep, that it may be my duty
To kiss a tear from off thy face.”

Of course it is so much lovelier in its original German, for nothing bears a translation so poorly as poetry.

It is said that love never sails on a calm sea. I think perhaps it is true. The family were always just beyond the portieres and one night I discovered the young brother squatted down behind the very sofa we were sitting upon, listening to every word of my tenderly whispered wooing. A stifled giggle gave him away and I took a keen pleasure in yanking him roughly out.

During the summer of 1874 the Union Park Church gave a picnic in Lincoln Park. We went in large busses drawn by horses, and carried our lunch-baskets and wraps on our laps. The streets had not all been paved since the fire, but the roughness and lurching against one another only added to the merriment. The Dickinsons had packed a good sized hamper with food, and Cara and I managed to get into the same bus, with the younger children hanging onto the back steps. I remember we had been instructed to watch them but am afraid they were allowed to shift for themselves from start to finish.

The picnic was gay—what I remember of it—with many games, a fine lunch, and a very congenial crowd. But I can only recall one little figure sitting beside me; her red hat tipped down rakishly over her black curls and a demure twinkle in her eyes whenever they were lifted to mine.

However, the crowd was not so stupid; they were altogether wise to our love-affair, and had already planned a grand coup at our expense. How little they knew that they were playing right into destiny's hand!

When it became time to leave for home there was a hurried packing and loading of the busses combined with much whispering and smothered giggles. Then a lash of whip, a shout, and the horses were off leaving us alone on a park bench with the picnic basket beside us. They simply had not called us or set a time for the sudden departure, and we—gazing out over the lagoon—had been too engrossed in ourselves to notice that they were breaking up the party.

We laughed good-naturedly over the silly prank and gathering up our things commenced the long walk through the park to the Clark Street car-line. I was carrying our wraps on one arm, but the lunch basket swung between us. All at once I noticed my sweetheart's wrist—so small, so white, so helpless. I could have put my thumb and forefinger once-and-a-half way around it. That tiny little wrist helping with the weight of the basket, looking as if it might break at any moment—pathetically frail and lovely—was a memory that I cherished all my later years. Suddenly a fierce desire to own all that daintiness—to protect that tender bit of womanhood—to stand between such exquisite loveliness and the tragedies of life forever—swept over me like a tidal wave. It seemed more than I could bear! At first I could not speak from pent-up emotion. I stopped in the middle of the path and let my end of the basket slip down. Of course she stopped too and the slight hold on the handle she had had gave way, causing the basket to roll over and allowing the remaining food, silverware and napkins to tumble out onto the grass.

Her surprised face lifted—and then she knew!

I shall not repeat what I said to her, Cara mia. Words like that from a man to a woman are never told. What your own father said to your sweet mother, when he asked her to share his life, must forever be put away in the Holy of Holies, to be a secret shrine for all time. But it is needless to say, that before we had reached the end of the path that was taking us home—Cara—for whom you were named, my darling—had promised to be my wife!





CARA DAYTON DICKINSON
(*Mrs. Falk*)

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA

CHAPTER VII

Marriage

WE WERE not married until the next Spring, my little one. A blustering, cloudy March day; cold and raw, but quite warm within the four walls of human affection. Our engagement had been a whirl of parties, visits, concerts and stolen moments of companionship, when we planned our future together. Of course we had very lengthy press notices, dwelling on my music and my fiancée's charm and talent. One paper cleverly paraphrased a good old Bible quotation under a cartoon showing two little love-birds sitting on a twig with heads touching. "Louis Falk is joined to his idol; leave him alone!"

But we were both too busy to be alone. The public seemed to come first. A joint concert which we gave in the fall preceeding our marriage proved a veritable triumph and gave my sweetheart a well-deserved start up the ladder of success. She sang gloriously and the critics were most enthusiastic.

I can see her as if it were but yesterday! Perhaps, in my clumsy man's way, I can describe her to you, Cara mia. She wore a corn-colored dress—I do not know the material, but it was something like heavy silk—looped about her slender hips and drawn back over a small "bustle", which made her waist appear unbelievably small. The neck was cut square and edged with rare old lace, that Mrs. Dickinson said had been in their family for generations. (Some of this same lace is on one of your carriage-robos, my little Cara.) Down the front of the bodice and around the waist ran a little row of flat velvet pansies in all shades of purple and yellow. I remember that this was quite a new idea and received several enthsusaistic comments.

But at last the winter passed and the holidays were over. I called daily at my fiancée's home, taking exquisite pleasure in seeing her bending over some fine bit of sewing, which she often hurriedly hid under her ample apron, knowing it was a garment for her marriage to me. In those days the bride spent hours, Cara mia, putting tiny stitches into fine linen—and also weaving dreams into

a deathless pattern. With the first warm rays of the sun on the snows of winter, we were to begin our journey together.

March 11, 1875. (Remember that date always, my darling child.)

What excitement around the Dickinson home on Washington Street and the old Union Park Church. Flowers on the font and pulpit, ribbons in the aisle, presents on tables in the church parlors, where the reception was to follow the ceremony, everyone running back and forth between the two places. Crowds of invited guests arriving in carriages (no autos then, my dear) and greater crowds of uninvited, frankly curious. Washington and Ashland Streets were blocked for a half-mile and the entrance of the church resembled a riot.

At the house the bridal party were gathering; gay, colorful, excitedly giggling. The names you may wish to know, for they were the popular young people of that neighborhood and time. There were four girls attending my bride; Eva Locke, Mary Goodrich, Marian Egan and Delia Dean. (Eva married Judge Ives, Marian became Mrs. Lucius Cheney, "Dell" Dean is happily married to an Evanston man, and Marian never wed.) Cara's sister Plea was the maid of honor and looked sedate for once in her radiant young life. Cara wanted her dearest friend Eva Butler, to be in the party, but she was married, and a "Matron of Honor" was not the style in those days. Eva and her sister Nellie were very popular in the social life of Chicago. Eva had married J. W. Ellsworth, whose son, Lincoln Ellsworth, flew to the North Pole not so long ago, and Nellie married William Linn.

Can you go back with me to that night, my little one? Can you see the long church aisle and that wedding procession? The pretty girls; the six self-conscious young men who ushered and the groom waiting for his bride? And at last she came toward me on the arm of her father; my sweet one—smiling!

Her wedding dress is folded away in our old trunk of memories—yellowed with age. It is for you to cherish and pass on to your children's children. It was new then, white and gleaming; satin, with tiny puffed sleeves. Down the front panel were orange-blossoms made of velvet, but a cluster of the natural flowers nestled in her dark curls sending out their fragrance.

Upon my own organ bench sat J. V. Flagler playing the wedding march from Lohengrin, while smilingly awaiting us before the flower-filled font, stood dear Dr. Helmer. Some forget their marriage—its beauty—its sacredness—but not I! If I were still a mortal on this dear old earth of yours, I know that my eyes would be filled with tears—not of sorrow, but of joy, to think that I had lived through such happiness—and won such a woman as my Cara!

A few words—God's blessing—and we were man and wife; to

remain so for fifty long happy years, until the golden half-century put its blessing once more on our brows. Yes, divorce is easy in these later times, *Cara mia*, and vows are lightly taken. But the glory of a married life that can stretch over the years until sundown, is the most perfect of all human experiences—except perhaps, parenthood.

After the ceremony we went down to the gayly decorated parlors of the church to receive our guests and cut the bridal cake. We stood under an arch of smilax and white flowers with the happy bridal attendants stringing out into a long line beyond us, and our families on the opposite side. In an adjoining room were the many beautiful and costly gifts.

Some of our presents will come to you, little one, when you are older, for they were mostly silver pieces and are still in the family. You will hold those lovely old gifts in your soft young fingers and think of that wedding so many long years before you were born. Especially the fine old flat-silver in the chest of table service that was given to us by the Union Park Church. In this chest among the beautiful old pieces is tucked away two little clasped hands that rested on the top of our wedding cake. They have crumbled a bit with the passing of the years but you will love to keep them always, for they are so old and exquisite and show such tender and pathetic sentiment.

But among all the silver and other handsome pieces were some really useful though plain articles. You will smile to read of them I fear, and I know you will laugh outright over other quaint ones.

Mrs. Dickinson gave her daughter a sewing-machine—highly valued in those days when “ready-to-wear” clothes were unknown. Two friends gave us a “Rogers Group”—now a rare curiosity—and a vase of wax autumn leaves under glass. There was also a gift very popular at the time and also expensive; a Stereoscope with a set of “views”. And a ravishing “mouchoir case”—(don’t ask me what it was for, my dear)—heavily embroidered in beads. But the gift we had expected, and which no respectable family was without, was a huge, almost impossible-to-lift Family Bible, with places in front for records of marriages, births and deaths. This was a gift of Mrs. Dayton, grandmother of the bride.

Musicians run true to form. Father and my brother Theo gave us our piano, which made quite an impression on all the relatives. Dr. Ziegfeld, knowing our love of opera, gave Cara an exquisite pair of opera-glasses, “made in Paris” of mother-of-pearl. Then I had been sitting for my portrait by the famous artist Peterson, and this was to be a surprise to Cara from Theo. (Later he painted the companion piece of my wife, and these two now hang in your grandmother’s home.) Young Allan and Pleđa gave us a “water-

set"—huge pitcher, tray, and goblets, all of heavy silver-plate. You see, Cara mia, this was long before cock-tails and high-balls were known—and water was not to be apologized for. Cake baskets, card trays, jewel-cases—oh, we were a popular pair, I assure you! Linen, mats, pictures, "tidies" for chairs, et cetera—we welcomed them all, for after the honeymoon we were to return to live in a home of our own.

The reception was a blur of faces; I can only recall a few. Mrs. Dickinson, dressed in black satin and old lace, more a regal *grande dame* than ever; Pleda, radiant and surrounded by a bevy of young beaux; Allan, with eyes on the abundance of refreshments; my proud father and his sons; gentle Dr. Helmer and our many church friends, and Dr. Ziegfeld with probably every well-known musician in Chicago. Handshaking. Laughter. Congratulations.

But all the while, Cara mia, my heart was singing its immortal "song without words"—for beside me—her orange-blossoms sending out their exquisite fragrance—stood that other Cara, my wife. Every now and then she would lift her face to mine and smile into my eyes, with that smile brides have of utter trust in their chosen one for all the years to come.

Before the gaiety was over, we hastened away in a shower of rice to change our finery for travelling clothes. More hurry, more excitement, more giggling of our friends. Then the hand-clasp of the man who had given his child into my keeping; a blessing in German from my own father; the usual maternal tears from Cara's mother; final shouts; a rush for the carriage, and we were off for New Orleans!

"Oh, heart of mine! Trusting to me
Your youth, your beauty—all
The intimate and secret dreams of life!
May God withhold the starlight and the sun,
If ever I should fail thee—
Sweetheart! Wife!"



MRS. LOUIS FALK AS "JOSEPHINE"

(Pinufore, 1879)

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA

CHAPTER VIII

My Wife

OUR first home, Cara mia, was on Ashland Avenue. My clever little wife was a good housekeeper and a charming hostess. We had many mutual friends in both social and musical circles, and found entertaining them one of our greatest joys. But our professional life together was paramount to all else. It seldom comes to husband and wife to share a joint success as we did. Never did discord or jealousy creep in. We were proud of one another's achievements and were happiest when appearing on the same concert stage.

Your great-grandmother became a very popular soprano during the ten or fifteen years that followed our marriage. Her high clear coloratura voice was almost birdlike in quality, and she was so small, so dainty, that she made a charming picture before her audience. But what delighted me most, she chose to use her married name professionally, and became known over the country as simply "Mrs. Louis Falk"—and I believe the public admired her for it.

My wife's engagements were many and flattering. She sang with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra, The Minneapolis Symphony, and was soloist at many of my own organ dedications throughout the middle west. She toured the country as a special soloist with the original Shubert Quartette and had a very successful Testimonial Concert given her in the early 80's.

About two years after our marriage she became the soprano in the quartette of the Union Park Congregational Church—a position she held for over seventeen years. During that period we were together in our work almost constantly. Aside from the two services on Sunday, we were both engaged in the Jewish Synagogue on Saturday mornings—first in Sinai and later, for eleven years, in Zion Temple on Ogden Avenue facing west at Union Park.

In those days, the churches of Chicago had the finest singers that could possibly be engaged, for it was the correct thing to attend church on the first day of the week, and no one made apology for going. So it was no small wonder that when a company was formed

to present the famous Gilbert and Sullivan operas—causing such a furor in England—the solo parts of the casts should be drawn from the city church choirs. And when in 1879 the “Chicago Church Choir Company” was organized, it was composed of the picked voices from city churches. And from “Union Park”—my wife was selected.

“Pinafore” was chosen to open the venture and its success was instantaneous and assured. There are probably many still living who remember the popular performances in Haverly’s Theatre (when J. B. Haverly was proprietor).

Will J. Davis was the producer and manager. My wife was chosen to play the lead and so became the original “*Josephine*.” Ada Somers, *Hebe*; John McWade, *the Captain*; Charles Knorr, *Ralph Rackstraw*, and Jessie Bartlett (later the wife of Mr. Davis) *Buttercup*. Dear Jessie! She was so high-strung (temperamental you would call it today) so beautiful and such a favorite. She always sang in her dressing-room if anything displeased her. We would smile to hear her voice as she shut herself in to dress and “make-up” for a performance, for the madder she was, the louder she sang. Years later Jessie Bartlett Davis went into “The Bostonians”—a very successful opera company in the east—and will always be remembered for her singing in “Robin Hood” that well-known, beloved song that she made so famous—“O Promise Me!”

The “C. C. C. C.,” as it was called, toured the country following their long successful run in Chicago. I want to quote here from the press of that day, so that you may always have the authentic words before you, regarding your dear great-grandmother’s lovely singing, for having been named for her, Cara mia, who knows but what you may inherit her voice.

Toledo: “Mrs. Louis Falk as ‘Josephine’ stands pre-eminently forth as a superior artist.”

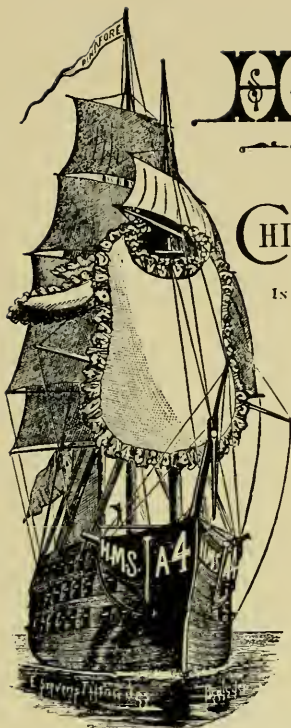
St. Louis: “Mrs. Louis Falk charmed the audience with her clear voice and graceful acting.”

Louisville Post: “The high art standard which Mrs. Falk as prima donna sets up is attained by all the others, and a pleasing artistic delivery of Sullivan’s musical gems is the rule and not the exception in the Chicago Church Choir Company.”

Chicago Times: “Mrs. Louis Falk and Jessie Bartlett Davis did full justice to the solos and duets which fell to their characters. . . . Mrs. Falk in new costumes* was as delightful as ever. . . .”

Chicago Tribune: “The famous ‘Chicago Church Choir Company’ close the most successful of all their wonderfully successful engagements, at Haverly’s this evening . . . they will soon make

* All of Mrs. Falk’s costumes were made by Field, Leiter & Co.—now Marshall Field & Co.



Haverly's Theatre,

J. H. HAVERLY, *Manager and Proprietor.*

CHICAGO CHURCH CHOIR COMPANY

IN GILBERT AND SULLIVAN'S CHARMING NAUTICAL OPERA,

H. M. S.

PINAFORE!

OR,

"THE LASS THAT LOVED A SAILOR."

MUSICAL DIRECTOR - - A. J. CRESWOLD.
Organist of Trinity Episcopal Church.

STAGE MANAGER, - - CON. T. MURPHY
Of Wallack's Theatre, New York.

COMMENCING

Monday, June 9th.

Every Evening, Wednesday and Saturday Matinees.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| | |
|---|--|
| RT. HON. SIR JOS. PORTER, K. C. B., First Lord of the Admiralty: | FRANK A. BOWEN, (Basso Plymouth Church). |
| CAPT. CORCORAN, Command'g H. M. S. Pinafore. | JNO. E. McWADE, (Baritone Trinity Methodist Church). |
| RALPH RACKSTRAW, Able Seaman—Josephine's Lover. | CHAS. A. KNORR, (Tenor Trinity Episcopal Church). |
| DICK DEADEYE—Able Seaman. | LOU. W. RAYMOND. |
| BILL BOBSTAY, Boatswain. | CHAS. F. NOBLE, (Basso Oriental and Chicago Quartette-). |
| BOB BECKETT—Carpenter's Mate. | C. M. COLLINS. |
| TOM BOWLIN, Boatswain's Mate. | AUG. LIVERMAN, (Basso Profundo St. Patrick's). |
| TOM TUCKER—Midshipmite. | LITTLE DOLLY CURRY. |
| SERGEANT OF MARINES. | E. C. ELLIS. |
| JOSEPHINE, The Captain's Daughter. | MRS. LOUIS FALK, (Soprano Union Park Cong'l Church). |
| HEBE, Sir Joseph's First Cousin. | MRS. ETTIE S. TILTON. |
| LITTLE BUTTERCUP—(Mrs. Cripps) A Portsmouth Bumboat Woman. | MISS JESSIE F. BARTLETT, (Contralto Church of the Messiah). |

First Lord's Sisters, his Cousins and his Aunts, Sailors, etc.

BY CHORUS OF EIGHTY TRAINED VOICES.

SCENE: Deck of H. M. S. Pinafore, off Portsmouth, England.

ACT I.—NOON. ACT II.—MOONLIGHT.

PROGRAM

Opera: Pinafore, 1879

a tour of the Eastern cities, which they will 'capture,' of course, as they have done wherever they have gone."

Later in the season "Trial by Jury" and "The Rival Cantineers" replaced "Pinafore," but none of the other operas had the great success that the first achieved.

For awhile I directed the orchestra of this opera company so that my wife and I might remain together, but when the College opened in late September, I was back again at my classes and church positions.

Several famous organs were now being built in Chicago; organs made by well-known firms, such as Hook and Hastings, Skinner, and later Austin and W. W. Kimball. The day of the theatre organ that could produce anything from a cow-bell to a bomb explosion had not yet arrived—praise be!—and the selection of combination of "stops" was still an art in itself, to say nothing of the manipulation of the great pedals. Many concert halls and private homes were installing various sized organs, but the churches possessed the largest.

Ole Bull, greatest violinist of his day, came to Chicago in 1877 and it was my pleasure not only to hear this great man, Cara mia, but to play on the same program with him, and my wife to sing. She was also soloist for Zaver Scharwenka, when he came to Chicago in 1891, with Charlotte Cushman en tour, and with "Johnny" Hand's famous band.

About this time I had a flattering offer to go to Brooklyn and become the organist of the church where the famous Henry Ward Beecher was pastor. It was so tempting in both salary and position that I wavered for several days, but knowing that it would mean an entire new start, in both teaching and my concert work, to say nothing of leaving my friends and our two families, I at last decided against the change, much to my wife's joy and also the Union Park committee and Dr. Frederick Noble, the new and well-loved minister.

Had we moved East, Cara mia, your grandmother would have been born in Brooklyn, and no telling where your own mother would have seen the light of day, or you, for that matter, my sweet one. On such a thread of chance hangs our destinies—or, is it not truer that our lives are governed by a wiser Providence than we realize. But the die was cast. I chose to remain in Chicago, and here three generations have come into existence since that day.

During these busy years we moved from Ashland to Warren Avenue, into a very modern three-floors and a dining-room-and-kitchen-basement stone house. This stood directly opposite Union Park and very convenient to my churches. We felt very proud of our home. The city had been growing rapidly when the "Elegant eighties" arrived, and the years of that decade and the following, were perhaps the most profitable and assuredly the busiest of my musical life. My wife, too, had achieved a position of recognized

success, second only to the artists of Europe and New York City. Following Pinafore and the other Gilbert and Sullivan operas she appeared in, she received many flattering offers to join Eastern companies and continue her professional life on the stage. Many managers sought her out; she received what is now known as "fan mail"; flowers and press notices were daily food at her breakfast table, and one night a valuable diamond bracelet arrived at her dressing-room, tied to crimson roses. (This, however, was promptly returned to the sender, *Cara mia*, I assure you!)

But a greater event in a woman's life than applause or diamonds was nearing.

Several years after Pinafore had reached its height of popularity, a dear thing upset three families in the company. Three of the women soloists—the leading roles to be exact—were looking forward to the blessed event of motherhood. Ada Somers, recently married to John McWade; Jessie Bartlett Davis and my own dear wife. A clever little article appeared in one of the newspapers, which you will find in our old scrap-book carefully kept through the years. (Quote) "It has been an open secret in social and musical circles for some time, that the three leading lady members of the Church Choir "Pinafore" company were competing for the honors of maternity. Mrs. John R. McWade (Ada Somers) took first prize with a boy, and now Mrs. Louis Falk takes second money."

This ended my wife's stage career, for after our child was born, no power on earth would take her from our home and "on the road" again. She continued with her church and concert singing, but refused the most tempting offers to leave Chicago. And after all, are not "home keeping hearts" the happiest?

The months of summer and autumn passed serenely. November came. We were sitting in our living-room one stormy night, happy in our calm companionship. My dear wife was embroidering something that looked like daisies upon a bit of soft white flannel, when suddenly she glanced up at me with a new, strange look in her deep blue eyes. I had never seen just that expression before, *Cara mia*, and surprise kept me silent. Then suddenly I remembered another Mother-to-be, who heard in the stillness of her heart a Voice speaking—"Blessed art thou among women—" and I realized with a great throb of wonder and awe, that all the mothers of the world heard this same Voice, telling them that a little child would soon be held in their waiting arms.

I smiled back into her dear eyes reassuringly and noticed that she ran her needle thoughtfully into the place where she had stopped sewing and slowly folded up her work and laid it away. Ask your mother, *Cara mia*, to show you that little flannel garment, started so long ago but never finished, for it is, with other "memories", folded away in the old, old trunk.

PROGRAMME.

Concert Complimentary

TO

OLE BULL,

Friday Evening, February 16, 1877.

1. "Fantasie and Fugne,".....LISZT
Organ — MR. LOUIS FALK.
2. "The Snow lies White,".....MARSTON
MRS. LOUIS FALK.
3. "The Mountains of Norway,".....OLE BULL
OLE BULL.
4. "Shadow Song from Dinorah,".... MEYERBEER
MRS. LOUIS FALK.
5. *Overture*, "Midsummer's Night Dream,"
MENDELSSOHN
Organ — MR. LOUIS FALK.
6. "Sicilian e Tarantella,".....OLE BULL
OLE BULL.
Organ and Piano Accompaniment.
7. "Birds of Spring,".....BENEDICT
MRS. LOUIS FALK.
8. "Recitative and Carnival of Venice,".....OLE BULL
OLE BULL.
9. "Variations in F,".....BUCK
Organ — MR. LOUIS FALK.

☞ The Piano used at this Concert, is kindly furnished by Mr. HENRY NUNNS, the maker of the instrument.

PROGRAM

Concert: Ole Bull, 1877

The next night our daughter was born and we named her after the two grandmothers—Cara, for my wife's mother (and herself) and Francesea for my own mother. My wife had sung many famous lullabies in her years of music, but none so lovely as she would now sing for her own child—she who became your grandmother. And stranger still, in years much later, that child of ours wrote the following verse to her mother—completing a circle, as it were, of song:

“Into her arms they laid me, newly born,
And they who stood beside her said she smiled
With that same holy smile that angels wear.
She loved me from my birth . . . her little child.
Forgotten were her hours of agony;
Forgiven, Life, for every cruel pain.
‘She smiled’ . . . and trembling, drew her baby close,
And there a mother-love was born again!”

Never was there such a happy home! So many friends and relatives calling with various gifts. Strange foreign-looking presents; articles made by New England aunts; more jewelry and expensive gifts than a baby should ever have. And among all these lovely things, was a huge cradle of roses and fern sent to the mother by my dear friend Dr. Ziegfeld. (And in another score of years, Cara mia, he sent its duplicate to our daughter when your mother was born.)

In 1888 I took my wife on a second “Honeymoon” through Europe. She would never rest until she had seen my birthplace, the cities where I had studied, and where my first concert tour was made. We left our baby with her grandmother—(a thing which seems to be usual in most families)—and spent two happy months drifting about, carefree and content. While on a trip down the Rhine, my wife made some charming sketches of the old ruins of famous castles, all of which are in our scrap-book, faded but tenderly interesting. We also bought many gifts in Leipzig and Dresden, the cities where I attended so many wonderful concerts and operas. Little did I think, when I was walking fifteen weary miles in order to hear Lohengrin in the cheapest possible way, that I would ever return to give my wife pleasures that I had never dreamed of. But she understood, and loved that long-ago lad who heard his first Wagner from the highest gallery, equally as well as the man who could now buy fine seats for her.

We also returned to Unter Ostern in Hesse Darmstadt, in order to see my birthplace and the dear old nurse, Frau Maul. She was in her garden when we arrived—the same little plot of green down the hill where I first met her. Older, more feeble, wrinkled and bent, but with the same bright eyes and sunny smile as when I stayed with

her back in my youth and slept under her feather-bed. How she welcomed my wife! To her my Cara was an exquisite thing—an American girl who had married “Mina’s son Louis,” and given him a child.

But that was not all. That evening we sat in the garden, listening to the nightingales, when suddenly my wife started to sing—softly, so not to disturb the birds—with little runs and thrills, entirely without words. My old nurse listened in awe for awhile, then whispered to me solemnly—“You said you had no nightingales in America, Louis? So? Then the good God gave you one!”

Frau Maul was in her seventies now, and not so very well. When we left her the next day I knew that I should never see my old nurse again. But I had made her happy by those two visits—especially when I brought my wife.

By autumn we were anxious to return to Chicago. Even though my wife’s father cabled a code word at every city we visited—“Jasmine”—meaning “All is well!”—we were hungry to see our little daughter and home once more. We had a busy winter booked ahead of us and were eager to be back in our musical world again. Life was promising so much! We were entering our noon-day together, and the best was before us!

Note: A “Figurine” of Mrs. Falk appears in the case of “Early Chicago Women” at the Chicago Historical Society Building.





THE FALK BROTHERS — 1880

*Florenz, 20; John, 22
Louis, 32; Theodore, 34; Rudolph, 30*

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
URBANA

CHAPTER IX

1890-1900

THE "Gay Nineties"! The days of the Columbian Exposition! The sinking of the battleship "Maine" and the Spanish-American war! Ten thrilling years!

And in our city. The building of the Auditorium, Art Institute's new headquarters, Public Library, and all the early "sky-scrapers"—as the buildings over ten stories were then called. The rapid growth of the residential sections and the building of the Elevated "Loop," that gave downtown Chicago its permanent name. The park system of beautiful boulevards through six large parks and many smaller ones. The Drainage Canal, changing the course of the Chicago river. New suburbs opened up. Expansion.

And in our families—also many changes. The death of my wife's father in 1895—that gentle personality so greatly missed from the home. My brother Florenz, who left us in 1900 at the age of forty-two, and my step-mother, who died in Sandusky. Also many musical contemporaries and dear friends.

There was the usual scattering of relatives, as the years went on. My wife's brother Allan—married for the second time following his first wife's early death—moved to Texas in 1893, where his children and grandchildren are now living. Two of my brothers also left Chicago. John—who had married sweet Amelia Starr of Belvidere in 1881—decided to make his home in New England; and Rudolph settled in Missouri and later in California. Of all our number, only Thea and I remained in the Middle-west.

Chicago was just sixty years old when the World's Columbian Exposition opened its wide, white gates. It was a great success, my Cara, and to my mind more beautiful than the one now commemorating the city's 100th birthday.

Of course there were no exhibits quite so wonderful as those shown today, with aeroplanes, radio, television and other breath-taking inventions of this age, but the buildings themselves were so dignified and beautiful, and conformed so perfectly in architecture and absence of any color, that it deserved its immediate name of

“The White City.” All statuary, domes, fountains and esplanades suggested European grandeur and all the beauty of the Old World.

I had many concerts in the Auditorium that season, along with other of our Chicago organists—Clarence Eddy, Harrison Wild, and Wilhelm Middelschulte.

How tragic it would have been, *Cara mia*, had that grand old building been torn down or condemned in these recent years. And how loyal and brave it was to re-condition and re-dedicate it for music in this year of 1933—A Century of Progress. It only shows what Chicagoans can and will do!

But the organ—my old organ, as I love to think of it—is gone!

In 1923 I was asked to give my opinion as to whether the noble old instrument could be repaired and used again, but I found the great pipes rusted entirely through in places, the bellows warped and torn, and so much needed for its restoration, that I reported sadly that a new organ would be cheaper and give better service. So the old instrument remains simply a silent memory of a past chapter in Chicago’s musical history. A golden voice mute with age!

In 1898 I left the Union Park Congregational Church, after twenty-seven years as organist and choir master, to take a new position in the Oak Park Congregational Church of which Dr. William E. Barton was pastor. (He was the father of Bruce Barton, noted writer.) I remained in this Oak Park Church ten years, during which time, Dr. Barton and I collaborated in a New Year’s Midnight Service and several short cantatas—he writing or arranging the words and I the music. The quartette was a splendid one and the soloists excellent.

My wife left Union Park when I did but never accepted another church position, choosing rather to devote more time to her home and social life. She continued with concert engagements, however, until 1904, or thereabouts, when our daughter stepped into her mother’s shoes and became the soloist at nearly all of my organ dedication concerts—saving me from many a lonely tour.

But I am ahead of my story, *Cara mia*, and into another century. Let me go back. The Chicago Musical College, now in its new home on Michigan Avenue, was at the height of a successful career. It was ranked as one of the leading musical schools of America, and I believe the largest in class enrollment. Its Faculty read like a page from a European conservatory—great names—great teachers. The Commencement exercises were held in the Auditorium each June; the graduating classes numbering up into the hundreds. Dr. H. W. Thomas always gave the Valedictory address and Dr. Ziegfeld handed out the diplomas and awards. Diamond medals were given for the highest standing—these artist-pupils appearing on the program—vocal, violin and piano students—accompanied by full orchestra. The

Faculty sat on the stage in front of the great class. Perfume of flowers; dazzling white of the gowns; hundreds of hands clapping; proud parents, friends and teachers. And Dr. Ziegfeld's dream come true!

Meanwhile, his eldest son Florenz had become a power in the theatrical world. The "Follies" came later, but "Flo's" spectacular start was in bringing Sandow, the world's strongest man, for a wide tour, and later Anna Held, Parisienne actress and beauty, who immediately became a sensation on Broadway. Flo, Jr., months later married Miss Held—(Dr. Ziegfeld always referring to her lovingly as "Mein daughter Ahnna")—and although divorced in later years, remained her close friend and advisor. How years pass! Since those days, he became New York's greatest producer, the husband of the lovely Billie Burke and father of Patricia, and now has also passed on into the land of the silence and spaces . . .

We were not always solemn and severe on the Faculty, *Cara mia*. We had a great many good times together and played many jokes. I shall never forget one pianist, who fearful of a high note struck "staccato" would mark the key with his pencil before a performance. Another artist—a violinist—changed that mark five minutes before his friend's appearance, to the next note. When the time came and the key was struck, of course it was a discord. Our performer looked dazed, swore softly under his breath, but realizing what had happened, continued unperturbed, hitting the right note (unmarked) triumphantly. The next time the violinist had a big concert, he noticed a peculiar smell on the stage. Walking back and forth he tried to escape the odor but it followed him. He found, after the number had been finished and he had left the stage, a bit of Limburger cheese tucked carefully under the fret of his fiddle, so that he unconsciously had been "cuddling" the vile odor under his chin.

Never think for a moment, *Cara mia*, that professional jealousy creeps in and disrupts loyalty and affection. Some of the truest friends I ever had were among my fellow musicians. Naturally we discussed other artists when together—sometimes critically—but never with venom or even sarcastic wit.

It was our custom to gather around a table after closing hours at the College, or during an evening when we were not engaged, eating our sandwiches or—if hungry—thick steaks with "German fried," and drinking beer or strong coffee. We usually chose the grill of the old Auditorium. I can see the room this moment, with my old friends about the table; Hans Von Schiller, Jacobsohn, Brune and Dr. Ziegfeld. Sometimes musicians from other schools would join us and famous writers or private instructors, such as Bernhard Ziehn, one of the greatest musical theorists ever known. He tried to "stump" me once with an original manuscript, but having made

somewhat of a study of this in Europe, I surprised him with my answer. When he asked "Who wrote this, Louis?" I took the old script reverently in my hands, studied it a moment, then answered "Bach." He had many famous books, manuscripts, and autographed compositions in his possession, but after his death most of them were never found.

There were several popular German restaurants in Chicago in those years, my Cara, that faded from sight during the cruel days of the Great War. Men are so apt to become unjust and bitter in times of stress, so that former brother or friend changes over-night to an enemy. But in the days I am writing about, Germany was well-beloved and her cafes and food very popular indeed. There was the old Kaiserhof, noted for its steaks; The Union, where we held our Ziegfeld dinners; The Edelweiss, Perfecto, and old "Quincy No. 9"—all famous for good cooking, beer, and camaraderie. Then at the West entrance to Lincoln Park was the "Relie House"—built entirely of grey melted debris from the Fire of '71. Scattered through the lumpy, lava-like walls, one might see a cup or a part of a plate or even a colorful fragment of a vase sticking out grotesquely. Unfortunately it was one of the old, utterly charming spots that this modern city chose to tear down during the Real Estate boom following the Great War. It is a pity there is so little sentiment in a growing town. The Relie House was quaint and an interesting reminder of a past period in Chicago's history—and it served most excellent food. It was on its walls that great fire picture was hung, to which I have already referred.

On the North side were other eating places known humbly as "Beer Gardens" where fine concerts were given during the summer months. Whether you were a frank admirer of this sort of open-air entertainment, or visited merely in a "slumming" spirit, you were well repaid. Entire families used to flock to these "Gardens" sitting quietly and soberly around a table, eating and listening to good music. I never saw anyone intoxicated at such a place!

A moment ago I spoke of the "Ziegfeld Club." This was an organization composed of members of the faculty and teachers' roster of the Chicago Musical College, that met once a month for dinner, program, and a general good time. I was the president of this club for over four years, and each year was given a very handsome gift by the members. There are two fine steins, my Cara, that were presented to me—one with an inscription on the silver lid, and the other a fine piece of work, cleverly showing organ pipes on its carved sides. They will both be yours some day, my dear, and I want you to value their sentiment.

To these "banquets"—as we chose to call our dinners—came many guests of honor; Leonecavallo, who wrote "Pagliacci" and Mascagni, composer of "Cavalleria Rusticana"—also singers of note from

the Metropolitan Opera of New York. Twice a year we had a special "Ladies' night" with an extra fine dinner and a great deal of champagne. It was considered quite the thing to be invited to one of these affairs, for there one met many really famous artists of that day.

Oh, Cara mia, what good friends I had in those closing days of the last century! Clarence Eddy, one of the best organists Chicago has ever known; my good friends Johnny Hand and John J. Hattstaedt, also men who started new music schools, such as Walter Spry and Charles E. Watt. Later Clarence Dickinson, Arthur Dunham and Albert Cottsworth joined the ranks of the great organists of this city. Yes, an organist held a high position in those days before the mechanical instrument and the theatre bands crowded the grand old organ out.

In 1896 I received the degree of Doctor of Music. At that time it was much more difficult to secure this honor, for it meant the submitting of an original composition—such as a symphony—for full orchestra. I was presented with this degree at our College Commencement, receiving the medal—a heavy one of gold with diamond inset—from the hand of my life-long friend, Dr. Ziegfeld. This medal is yours, Cara mia, along with the beautiful old watch the College gave me when I had completed twenty years on the Faculty board.

So now I dropped the "Mr."—and took the title that I carried to the end and by which my friends, still living, knew me best—Dr. Louis Falk.

The end of the last century brought new faces into the College, and graduated many pupils who are today well-known Chicago musicians. Maurice Rosenfeld, for many years musical critic of *The Daily News*, joined the Faculty, and Arthur Rech. During the next decade, Arthur Granquist, Mabel Sharp Herdien and Max Fischel won honors. The famous school was now at its peak.

I had been giving monthly oratorios in my church, augmenting my fine quartette with artists like Madam Josephine Chatterton, popular harpist of the last century, J. T. Ohlheiser, violinist, and Blatchford Kavanaugh, famous boy-soprano, borrowed for special occasions from H. B. Roney's boy-choir. These sacred services, where *The Messiah*, *Elijah*, *The Creation*, and other noted works were produced, brought record congregations from all over the city. The chorus numbers were sung by a picked group of voices, from which later came many fine artists.

And so I entered the new century, with only bright skies overhead, and all the work I could possibly do to occupy my days and nights. I was fifty-one when 1900 dawned—which is supposed to be the height of a man's career.

Union Park Congregational Church,

Rev. Dr. F. A. NOBLE,
Pastor.

CORNER WASHINGTON AND ASHLAND BOULEVARDS.



TWENTY-NINTH

SONG * SERVICE

Sunday Eve., Jan. 25, at 7.30 O'Clock.

ORATORIO

"THE CREATION,"

By JOSEPH HAYDN.

Gabriel and Eve, Soprano, . . . Mrs. LOUIS FALK

Uriel, Tenor, Mr. CHARLES A. KNORR

* Raphael and Adam, Bass, . . . Mr. JOHN R. ORTENGREN *

Miss FANCHON THOMPSON, Alto.

LOUIS FALK, Organist and Director.

Order . of . Services.

1. ORGAN VOLUNTARY AND DOXOLOGY.
2. INVOCATION, followed by chanting of the Lord's Prayer.
3. READING OF SCRIPTURES.
4. HYMN, Choir and Congregation.
5. ORATORIO—"The Creation," Part I.
6. ADDRESS BY THE PASTOR.
7. ORATORIO—"The Creation," Part II.
8. BENEDICTION.

The next regular Song Service will be held Sunday Evening, Feb. 22, 1891.

PROGRAM

Oratorio: "The Creation," 1891

CHAPTER X

“Sunset and Evening Star”

HAD I KNOWN, Cara mia, that I was to live another quarter of a century in the one beginning 1900, I would not have feared for the end in the terrible train wreck I was in, and from which I had such a miraculous escape.

It was during a short tour of several concerts through Wisconsin and Minnesota. Coaches were not made of steel in those days, and flimsy wood is quick to smash and quicker to burn.

It was late afternoon and I was sitting in the Pullman nearing my destination when the crash came. When I felt our car reel and start to roll on its side, some sense of preservation made me spring to my feet, grab the old-fashioned rack above my seat and hang on desperately as the train turned over. We somersaulted three times down the steep bluff we were skirting at the time of the accident and landed on the top of the car with wheels in the air. I found myself also on my head, but as far as I could tell, unhurt.

All around me were cries of the wounded and frightened passengers. Fire was the immediate danger, for it was winter and stoves still in use. The coach's door was upside-down, but rescuers soon had hacked it open. A burly man stuck his head in and demanded to know if any were still alive. A few moans answered him, and then I stepped forward—hurridly and trembling with excitement—to be greeted with a cheer and grabbed into someones embrace. They never expected to see a living soul come out of that crushed car, and as it was, I happened to be the only one uninjured on the entire train. When the train's official hurried around to settle for immediate damages, my reply was, that I wanted nothing but a bottle of Witch Hazel and a new hat. Later I was told that I might have collected damages from the company, but I was so filled with gratitude over my escape, that I only asked to sing my own “Jubilate Deo!”

Looking back to several such experiences, I wonder that I ever lived to the “ripe old age” that I did. There was the snow-slide in Colorado that buried our train for twenty-four hours, and the hotel fire in Kansas. And there was a deadly storm on the Atlantic and

an eleventh-hour decision not to attend the Iroquois Theatre with my wife on the afternoon it was destroyed. Kindly Fate had other plans for your great-grandfather, Cara mia.

In checking over the list of notable events during the early days of the present century, I have decided that the Pan American Fair in Buffalo—1901—comes first. It was a smaller exhibition than the Worlds Fair, but noteworthy.

Many of the country's organists were engaged to give series of concerts in the Temple of Music on the Fair grounds. I drew the dates of July 3rd to 6th and left, prepared to introduce some of the newest Pan-American composers of organ music. My wife and daughter accompanied me, as we were planning to continue our summer vacation in New England.

It is not of my concerts I wish to write, my Cara, but of an unusual event that brought me much publicity in the East—although I know of several men who would have done the same under the circumstances, or at least tried to.

Just as the concert was about to begin on the evening of July 4th, a terrific electrical storm descended upon the city and surrounding country, devastating enough to cut off the electric power from the great plant in nearby Niagara, and plunge the Exposition in gloom and the interior of the buildings into utter darkness.

The great hall was filled to capacity, but with the first down-pour of rain, crowds of Fair visitors fought to squeeze into the aisles for shelter. Just as I was about to open my program the ear-splitting crash came and all lights went out. The Woman's Building across the lawn from the Temple of Music had been struck by lightning, and we could hear the disorder that reigned on the Fair grounds. Someone screamed and a panic seemed inevitable, when one of the officials rushed up to the organ bench and cried in desperation—

"In God's name, what can we do!" My hands were already on the keys.

"Begin the program!" I yelled back, above the noise of the storm.

He hurried forward and at my loud chord for silence, spoke to the frightened audience, telling the great throng that we were in no danger and the concert would proceed as scheduled. It was only a feeble cheer that answered him, for the crowd doubted the possibility of such a thing under the circumstances. They did not recognize the Chicago spirit that was mine. With a true sense of touch and musical pitch I struck the opening notes of the "Overture to William Tell"—that great favorite of all organists—and plunged ahead, thereby averting a possible panic and perhaps tragedy.

For one hour I played in total darkness, choosing my stops by touch only and finding the right pedals by an experienced sense of

direction. I had covered six difficult numbers—interspersed with much hysterical applause—when some man brought a little tallow candle and placed it beside me. I immediately burst forth with the Doxology—“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow!”—and the great crowd, rising as one man from its seats, sang it with me. The next day the press made much of the affair, giving me credit for saving thousands of lives—praise that I did not deserve, for after all, to the music goes the credit. In that same Temple of Music only a few weeks later, William McKinley, 25th President of the United States, was shot down by an assassin.

In 1912 I returned to Buffalo to play on that same organ—it having been removed to a great municipal hall in that city—with my daughter as my soprano. And after eleven years, the press remembered how I had played my program in the dark. This time there was no storm, which was fortunate for my daughter.

In 1904 I gave a group of recitals at the St. Louis Fair, and in 1905 and 1915 at the Portland and San Francisco Expositions. Only a confusion of dates kept me from the one at San Diego. You see, Cara mia, The World's Fair in our own city had started quite an epidemic of this sort of entertainment.

During these days of Exposition concerts, our daughter married, and another big wedding flashed its colorful way across the pages of my life. This time I again took part in the service—“giving the bride away”—and another organist played the Lohengrin march. It was my good friend Wilhelm Middelschulte. John Ortengren, Swedish baritone and leader of the Swedish Glee Club of Chicago, who was also connected with the Chicago Musical College, sang during the service, and as in that far-off day at another wedding, all my musical associates were on hand. To see your only daughter marry, my Cara, is sometimes saddening, but I was entirely satisfied with the man of her choice, which gives any father a feeling of thankfulness. This man is your own grandfather, whom you love dearly.

And so another page of our family history was written. Yes, and before long another, for your sweet mother—the loveliest child ever born into a home—became one of our number. She was named Dorothy—which means “Gift of God.”

For several years my daughter kept up her concert work, extending her tours into more distant territory than her mother had done. Then suddenly she gave it up, for her little daughter was growing rapidly into girlhood, and like my wife, her child and home came first.

My dear old German father died soon after our grandchild Dorothy was born, in the eighty-third year of his life. His passing seemed to close the pages of that part of my life forever. Then in

1909 my wife's mother left us at the age of eighty. Two strong spirits—yet so utterly unlike.

Closer the twilight was advancing upon our afternoon, my Cara, and my wife and I found the hitherto excitement of musical careers just a little tiring. I left Oak Park in 1908 and while I always kept a church position—the last one covering fifteen years at the New Church, Kenwood—I never attempted great concerts and oratorios, as I had in the days when my wife was my soloist and we could work together. We were willing to hand over the torch to younger hands than ours. And speaking of hands, Cara mia, I almost forgot to tell you, that one of the “casts” of a man's hand in the Chicago Art Institute—from which thousands of students have sketched—was sculptured from mine. So if you ever study art in that grand old school and should see a long slender hand that looks as if it might have pressed the keys of a hundred organs, take your pen and pencil and make your drawing, for it may be the model of that same sensitive hand that once belonged to your great grandfather.

Dr. Ziegfeld by this time was getting well along in years, for he was several years older than I. After a serious illness, he decided to sell the old college that he had founded fifty years before. Many of his Faculty left at the same time and I was one. I had rounded out nearly that length of time myself, and remaining without my old friend seemed more than I could bear. The Chicago Musical College still goes on, however, with even a few of the same teachers who were there in my day—Rudolph Ganz, the president, and Glenn Dillard Gunn. But it is in another building now, with so many new faces that if I should return I know I would never recognize it. Soon after this change, Dr. Ziegfeld died,* and with his going something vital seemed to go out of my life forever. Youth, early friendship, and musical associations.

But I must hurry on, my Cara, for the shadows are lengthening and I fear you are growing weary.

In 1924 my wife and I moved to Cedar Street near the drive, to live with our daughter. In doing this, I had completed the circle of the city. West, following the fire of '71, South for ten years, and now back North—only a few blocks from where I had started; my homes on Townsend and later, on Oak.

I would often walk through that neighborhood alone, musing on the changes of the years. It gives one a peculiar, sad pleasure, Cara mia. There where the Opera Club stands on Walton near Dearborn, stood our second home, from which our old piano was rescued when the city burned. There my church, with Dr. Collyer at its head. A bit further south the spires of re-built Holy Name Cathedral reminded me of my first organ position in Chicago at the age of four—

* May 20, 1923.

teen. To the west, where the Ogden house stood, now rises the massive walls of the Newberry Library, and on the grassy lawn of Washington Square, soap-box orators rant and rave where in that far-off night my brother John dug a hole in the ground in a vain attempt to escape from the heat of a burning city.

Change all around me! A new Chicago! A new age of which I was not a part. Well, that is as it should be, *Cara mia*. Why should the old leaves remain clinging to the bough when there are so many fresh young buds unfolding? I would have loved to see my city fifty years hence! So thought I then—little realizing that I would ever return in this way, not only to see beyond the years we call our lives, but to speak to our beloved posterity.

But there are a few dear landmarks left of my early life that you will learn to love. *The old Union Park Church still stands and the house from which we were married. Then in Oak Park, the Congregational Church, and the house where your own mother Dorothy was born. Everytime you go into the old Auditorium you will think of me, your great-grandfather, who sat on that organ bench so many, many times and brought forth music of the old masters from the splendid instrument. And the same with Orchestra Hall and many old churches.

Yes, the new is blended with the old in this city we love. Changes have come since 1871 and 1893, but is it so different after all? Is not the same spirit alive in this year of 1933? Great fires and world wars, disaster and panic—nothing daunts it! In those early days it was a brave child, a daring youth. Today it is a full-grown man. But its heart is the same—big and understanding; ready to press on with the tide of the coming years.

My Chicago! The city where I spent sixty-four years of my life on earth. Where I worked and loved, and where my earthly heart now sleeps in the quiet beauty of Rosehill. Always love Chicago, *Cara mia*—it is your place of birth.

My brother Theo, who for more than forty years had been out of the ministry and had followed his dearer love, Art—(which he was not allowed to do in his youth)—now went back to his church at the age of seventy-four, and started a new parish in the far-northwestern part of the city. In four years, he had completed a new church building** and had a fine growing congregation. Then, as if realizing his work was done, left us one beautiful autumn day. To me it was a severe loss, for of all my family, Theo and I had been closest to one another. It seemed only yesterday that we were boys together, tossing down pebbles from the church roof in Rochester. With his death, I seemed to age.

But I am not through with this chronicle, *Cara mia*. There is

* New First Church.

** St. Timothy's Evangelical Lutheran.

always a last page to write in every story, and being a musician to the end, I must write of it.

The last time I played an organ! Yes, that is it—and such a happy occasion! So beautiful a closing page to this little story. It was at the wedding of your father and mother, my Cara—think of that! In old St. Chrysostom's on North Dearborn, where later you were christened, and where years before, I had dedicated their first organ.

Three happy weddings in my long life—my own, my daughter's, and now my granddaughter's. No part was there for me to fill in the wedding procession as on the two other occasions. I could sit on the organ bench calmly and look out over my family. They were all there: my wife—with whom only five weeks before I had celebrated our Golden Wedding; my daughter and her husband—the best pal a father-in-law ever had. And now their daughter Dorothy, and the man she was to marry. . . .

Lohengrin again! Triumphant! Eternal!

A man leaned over and spoke to me at the organ. . . .

"How does it seem," he asked, "to be playing your granddaughter's wedding march?"

"Fine!" I replied, my fingers throbbing to the familiar chords of Wagner. And then added—"And I expect to play at my *great*-granddaughter's wedding too!"

That would have been *you*, Cara mia!

But it was not to be! In six weeks I had journeyed on—following where others had blazed the trail—just across the little space.

Pneumonia they called it, but to me it was only that I was very, very tired—as I told them that last morning. Tired of the years pressing down upon me. Willing to hand over the torch to younger and stronger hands than mine. Anxious to seek new adventures and hear new symphonies not of this earth.

So with no tears, no pain, no fear and no regret; with my wife—who was to follow me in less than three short years—by my side, I fell asleep . . . with my head pillowed on the arm of my daughter—she who had been named for my German mother!

* * * * *

Dear little Cara mia—born into this old world on a bright, summer morning—expecting only joy and laughter to follow your adventuring steps—do not feel one bit of sadness at the close of this little story. Love endures—so does music. And the harmonies of earth and nature are the same as the harmonies of the Infinite. So listen carefully . . . for who knows but what the voice of that greatest-of-all-goddesses-of-art may speak to you, and you may inherit talent for music—especially the golden voice of her for whom you were named. It may be written in the stars!

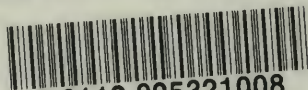
I hope so, dear!

“I’d love to think . . .
That after I have gathered patiently
A cargo full and fair
From every source, and see with pride
The treasure reach my vessel’s side,
That though I cannot wait
To see the voyage through,
There will be someone of my own . . .
Still here . . . to grasp the oar,
When other hands than mine
Shall bring my barque ashore!”

THE END,



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
780.923F184M C001
ACROSS THE LITTLE SPACE CHGO



3 0112 025321008